

AUGUSTA  
COUNTY



HISTORICAL SOCIETY

# AUGUSTA HISTORICAL BULLETIN

VOLUME 38  
2002







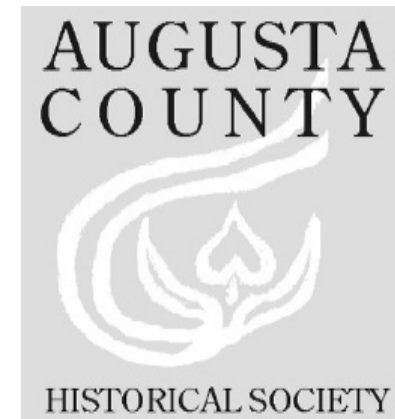
# Augusta Historical Bulletin

Published by the

AUGUSTA COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY

Founded 1964

Post Office Box 686  
Staunton, Virginia 24402-0686



VOLUME 38

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## Augusta Historical Bulletin: Editorial Policy

The editors of the Augusta Historical Bulletin welcome submissions relating to any topic or period in the history of Augusta County, Virginia, and its wider environs. Submissions may take the form of articles, research notes, edited documents, or indexes to historical documents. Other formats might be acceptable but prospective authors of such submissions are encouraged to consult with a member of the editorial board. With rare exceptions, the Bulletin does not publish manuscripts that focus exclusively on genealogical matters. Authors should strive to make their contributions accessible to a broad readership. In matters of form and style, authors should adhere to the guidelines and strictures set forth in the Chicago Manual of Style, 14<sup>th</sup> ed., or Kate L. Turabian, et al., A Manual for Writers of Term Papers, Theses, and Dissertations, 6<sup>th</sup> ed., both of which are widely available in libraries and bookstores. A style sheet, prepared by the editors of the Bulletin, is available upon request. Authors should submit four double-spaced copies of their manuscripts, with endnotes where applicable, and include photocopies of any illustrations. Upon acceptance of the manuscript for publication, authors must provide an electronic copy of it, as well as publishable-quality illustrations.

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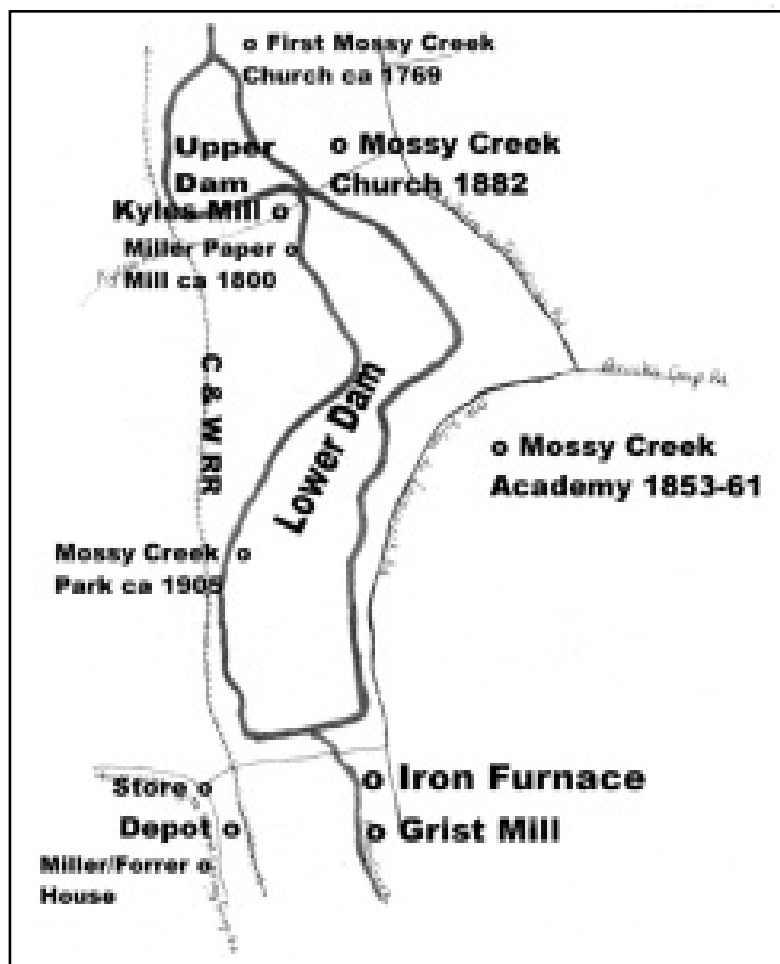
# Reflections of Valley History in the Waters of the Mossy Creek

by Dr. Charles W. Blair

Based on a presentation made at the Augusta County Historical Society fall meeting on October 29, 2001, at Mossy Creek Presbyterian Church.

The waters of Mossy Creek issue from a large spring at the village of Mt. Solon in northwestern Augusta County and flow northeastward to join the North River near the town of Bridgewater. Numerous aquatic plants grow in its clear cold waters and the stream is named in colonial land records as early as the 1740s. The Mossy Creek Presbyterian Church stands on a bluff above the stream about three miles below Mt. Solon and is surrounded by oak and maple trees. Beside the church is a large cemetery containing the earthly remains of generations who worshiped at the church and were active in the life of the surrounding community. Some of those who are buried in this quiet place experienced the voyage from Ireland to Pennsylvania and the journey south to the Valley of Virginia. Several participated in the American Revolution and many more faced the horrors of the Civil War. Each year the church yard and cemetery are visited by individuals from across the nation who are seeking information about their ancestors and the lives they led.

Information about these past generations was gathered from church and civil records and compiled in A History of Mossy Creek Presbyterian Church which was published in the autumn of the year 2000. A study of this information revealed much about Mossy Creek Church and the religious practices of its members. Also revealed were some insights concerning the nature of economic, social, and political life in northwestern Augusta County. These events, which occurred on the banks of Mossy Creek, reflect to some degree the history of the Valley of Virginia and testify to the richness of life experienced by those who lived in the area. This paper will attempt to describe both the general and unique features found in the history of this community. The people who organized the Mossy Creek congregation lived on Mossy Creek, the Long Glade, Moffetts Branch, Thorny Branch, North River, and other streams in the area.



Many resided within the current boundaries of Augusta County, but some lived in what is now Rockingham County. Most of the families appear to have been a part of the eighteenth century emigration from Ulster in the north of Ireland. Family names appearing among these early settlers in the Mossy Creek area were Erwin (Irvine, Ervin), Bell, Hogshead, Davies, Smith, McKamey, Stephenson, McCoy, Crawford, Nichols, and Woodell.<sup>1</sup>

Prior to the organization of a congregation at Mossy Creek, many of these early settlers attended worship services at the Augusta Stone Meeting House in present-day Fort Defiance while others attended the Cooks Creek Meeting House at Dayton. The journey to these distant meeting houses was long and difficult and the services lasted until late in the evening. A tradition exists that the Reverend John Craig at Augusta Stone Meeting House was requested to end services early so that families could return home with the benefit of daylight.

He supposedly responded that "It is far better that you lose your skins than your souls," and the schedule remained unchanged. A Mossy Creek quarter was included in early records of the Cooks Creek congregation and contains names later associated with Mossy Creek.<sup>2</sup> However, the Cooks Creek congregation was without a pastor after the departure of the Reverend Alexander Miller in 1763.

By 1768 efforts to organize a congregation in the Mossy Creek area must have been underway. John Davies, who lived where Mossy Creek enters North River, and a "Mr. McKamey," who lived near Stribling Springs, are said to have requested in 1768 that Hanover Presbytery organize a congregation at Mossy Creek, but there is no reference about such a request in the minutes of that body.<sup>3</sup> When Hanover Presbytery met at Tinkling Spring in April of 1769, the minutes state that "Mr. Jackson accepts the call from Peaked Mountain, Cooks Creek and the people uniting with them."<sup>4</sup> Subsequent minutes identify "the people uniting with them" as congregations at Mossy Creek and Linville Creek. In October of 1769 Hanover Presbytery received a petition from the congregation at Mossy Creek "about fixing ye seat of their publick worship." Action on the petition was delayed to the next meeting and Mr. Craig's congregation was urged to be present.<sup>5</sup> When the next meeting of Hanover Presbytery was held in April of 1770, James Hogshead, Sr., and Col. Abraham Smith appeared as commissioners representing the congregation at Mossy Creek. During its deliberations the Presbytery decreed:

that the congregation at Mossy Creek be allowed to erect their house of publick worship on the Branch of Mossy Creek because of their necessity by want of sure water elsewhere, nearer to the centre of their Congregation.<sup>6</sup>

This first house of worship was located a half-mile up stream from the present church and undoubtedly was a crude log structure with a dirt floor. The first meeting house was located on land owned by John McCoy whose descendent, William McCoy, later represented the area in the U.S. Congress. McCoy later moved to the Bullpasture River and sold the land to Abel Griffith. The congregation did not hold land until 1787 when Abel and Magdeline Griffith deeded to the church three-and-one-half acres down stream at the site of the present church. This deed also conveyed to the congregation one acre which was described as an "old burying ground" and must have been the site of the first church.<sup>7</sup> No records identifying those buried at that site have been found.

As noted above, the Reverend Thomas Jackson was the first pastor of the church and served not only Mossy Creek but also congregations at Cooks Creek, Linville Creek, and Peaked Mountain. Little is known about his life, but he was

received as a licensed candidate for the ministry from Scotland by the Presbytery of New York in 1766. The Synod of Philadelphia and New York sent him south as a part of efforts to provide ministers to an increasing number of Presbyterians in Virginia and the Carolinas. A year after assuming his pastorate, controversy ensued among his churches about the schedule of worship services. Jackson decided that his practice of preaching every fourth Sunday at each of his four churches was disadvantageous to some under his care. He decided to establish a new schedule and hold services only at Mossy Creek, Peaked Mountain, and Linville Creek since those at Cooks Creek, because of their central location, could attend services with another congregation. As would be expected, the Cooks Creek congregation objected and Hanover Presbytery decided that the schedule would remain unchanged. Jackson then stated that if that was their recommendation, he would resign from his entire charge since he believed that the action violated the conditions of his call which allowed him to schedule services as he thought best. A compromise was reached and the schedule he proposed was allowed to continue except that the spring and fall communion services would be held at Cooks Creek and would include the Day of Fasting, the Day of Preparation, and the Day of Thanksgiving. All parties agreed to the arrangement and it was instituted.<sup>8</sup> In 1773 Jackson died and left no heirs. Tradition holds that his grave is beneath the waters of Silver Lake at Dayton.

The congregation was without a pastor for the next seven years and was served by occasional supply ministers. One of these visiting ministers has left the only known early description of the Mossy Creek area. Philip Fithian visited the congregation in 1776 and noted in his journal that:

Mr Hunter gave a sermon at Mossy Creek near the furnace. This Neighborhood is covered with Pine; finely watered with branches of the Shenadore; & by Appearance is fertile. Every part of this broad Valley is settleable and filled with inhabitants.<sup>9</sup>

The Reverend Benjamin Erwin was called as pastor of both Mossy Creek and Cooks Creek Churches in 1779 during the Revolution.<sup>10</sup> Benjamin Erwin may have been related to the numerous Erwins in his congregations at Mossy Creek and Cooks Creek, but such ties have not been clearly established. He was a graduate of the College of New Jersey and married Sarah Brewster from Rockingham County in 1782.<sup>11</sup> In 1809 he left Virginia and spent the remainder of his life in Kentucky where his will was filed in 1832.<sup>12</sup> His tenure at Mossy Creek lasted for twenty-six years and is the longest in the history of the church. While his service was long, it was not without problems. The newly-established

Lexington Presbytery sought to assess the state of its churches following the American Revolution in 1785. The committee appointed to visit Mossy Creek reported that the congregation "did not feel themselves bound collectively, but only as individuals for Mr. Erwin's support." Likewise the congregation believed "that they were not being catechized as often as they should."<sup>13</sup> While he continued to serve the congregation, difficulties in paying his stipend continued. Sometimes he served as installed pastor, but at other times he was stated supply minister for the congregation. In 1789 he also assumed responsibility for the congregation at Harrisonburg.

Early records indicate that many of the Scotch-Irish settlers were anxious to have the services of an ordained preacher on a regular basis. The shortage of trained clergymen, the scattered nature of the population, and difficulties associated with travel were obstacles that had to be overcome if this need was to be met. During the three decades following the organization of the church, relationships between pastors and the congregation were not always tranquil. Whether these conflicts were products of the legendary contentiousness of the Scotch-Irish, a growing sense of individualism, or economic difficulties associated with life in the new nation cannot be determined. Regardless, difficulty in raising funds to meet the minister's stipend was to be a problem until the Civil War. Similar problems were recorded during the pastorates of the Reverends Messrs. Andrew B. Davidson, John Hendren, and John A. Van Lear. Lexington Presbytery strongly encouraged pastors to avoid avocations such as teaching and local congregations expected full-time dedication to the ministry. However, congregations often were either unable or unwilling to provide the financial support which would enable their pastors to meet these expectations.

Some information concerning worship practices can be found in church records. Worship services were held only once or twice a month. The second church building, a log structure that had never been chinked, probably remained in use until about 1818 when a frame building was built. The difficulty of attending to long sermons as cold winter winds entered between the logs can only be imagined. The sacrament of Holy Communion was administered twice a year in the fall and spring. These observances lasted three days with a day of fasting, a day of preparation, and a day of thanksgiving. Members who had received tokens admitting them to the sacrament were seated at the table and given the elements.<sup>14</sup> A lead token used at Mossy Creek is in the possession of the church. The importance of these sacramental occasions is illustrated in church records that contain lists of members who communed. How long the three-day observance persisted is unknown, but as late as 1912 preparatory

services were held the day before the administration of the sacrament.

The ambivalence toward emotionalism in worship that has been a part of the Presbyterian tradition is evident in the records of Mossy Creek Church. While revivalism was a major feature of Valley religious practice in the early nineteenth century, some reservations about it existed. In 1833 a "series of special meetings" were held and a large number of individuals made professions of faith. The Reverend John Hendren, who was pastor from 1818 to 1835 and who served both Mossy Creek and Union Church, expressed doubts about the results of these efforts because he feared that it was an emotional response that would not result in long-term commitment. Three of those who professed later requested to be withdrawn from church membership because they had responded to "undue religious excitement." Special meetings were a part of church practice in the latter part of the nineteenth century but had disappeared by the middle of the twentieth century. This affinity for the more conservative aspects of Presbyterianism was again illustrated in 1844 when Elizabeth Herring, a member of the congregation, gave a pulpit Bible to the congregation. Accompanying the gift was a letter stating that if the minister at Mossy Creek ever ceased to present theology consistent with "the Old Side, Old School" position in the denomination, the gift was to be returned to her or her heirs.

Members of Mossy Creek Church in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries could expect to be subjected to church discipline. If a member was reported to have engaged in behavior inconsistent with church membership, the session would appoint a committee to investigate the allegations. If the reports were grounded in fact, charges were brought and a trial ensued. If found guilty, the offender was suspended from membership and the "sealing ordinances of the church" for either a definite or indefinite period of time. Evidence of a repentant attitude by the offender seemed in some cases to limit the severity of the penalty. The results of the trials were sometimes announced from the pulpit.

The Shenandoah Valley was settled not only by the Scotch-Irish, but also by Germans, English, and Dutch immigrants. While significant numbers of German immigrants came to present-day Augusta County, larger numbers settled in what is now Rockingham and Shenandoah Counties. The Presbyterian congregations at Cooks Creek, Peaked Mountain, and Mossy Creek were at the northern edge of the concentration of Scotch-Irish settlers in the area now comprising Augusta and Rockbridge Counties and near the southern edge of the larger number of Germans to the north.

Mossy Creek Church and the surrounding community contained members of these different ethnic groups. Their assimilation, to some degree, might be

called a Valley culture. As was stated, many of the families in the Mossy Creek area were products of the emigration from Ulster in the north of Ireland. All of the names identified with the Mossy Creek Presbyterian congregation at the time of its organization appear to be either Scottish or English. As late as the 1820s both the pastor and the clerk of the Session were natives of Ireland. Andrew Barry, who was married to the granddaughter of the Reverend John McCue, was clerk and was said to have been born in Ireland. The pastor, the Reverend John Hendren was born in County Down.<sup>15</sup>

Yet in the first comprehensive listing of people in the congregation assembled in 1809, several German surnames were recorded. Gradually more German surnames appeared in church membership data and by the 1830s and 1840s such names had become more numerous. While the Scotch-Irish surnames of Bell and Erwin were the most numerous, German family names such as Harnesbarger, Koogler, Shreckhise, Propts, Cupp (Koop), and Karicofe (Kirshof) were recorded. Two early German churches were in the area. St. Michael's German Reformed Church, located several miles to the east, and Emmanuel Church to the west, served members with German Reformed, Lutheran, and Dunkard backgrounds. Most of the German names found in the records at Mossy Creek appear to have been associated with Emmanuel Church.<sup>16</sup>

Intermarriage was probably a major reason for the appearance of German names at Mossy Creek, but other factors may have been at work. In the early nineteenth century the use of English in worship services was an issue in German churches. A history of St. Michael's Church stated that the pastor at Mossy Creek was invited occasionally to speak in English.<sup>17</sup> As early as 1810 the Reverend Andrew B. Davidson reported to Lexington Presbytery that he had preached at "the German church," but the site was not identified.<sup>18</sup> Thus, the desire for services in English by Germans may have caused some to affiliate with a church where English was used. As noted, Emmanuel Church served several German denominations but in 1838 St. Paul's Lutheran Church was organized and Emmanuel became a Dunkard (Brethren) church. Those of the German Reformed tradition may have seen the Mossy Creek church with its reformed theology as an alternative. The records of Mossy Creek Church indicate that few Presbyterians were leaving to join German churches. The few cases recorded were members with German surnames returning to German churches. Numerous families with German surnames were counted among the membership at Mossy Creek in the twentieth century. Undoubtedly, the presence of German neighbors and fellow church members influenced the folkways of the descendants of the original Scotch-Irish settlers. In the 1950s church members, regardless of ethnic



background, would “snit” apples, make “pon hoss” at butchering time, and eat “smear-case” or cottage cheese.

The Reverend John A. Van Lear, who was pastor of the church from 1837 until 1850, was of Dutch background. According to family members his grandfather, Jacobus Van Lear, came to Augusta County from New York. The pastor’s father, John Van Lear, married and moved to Montgomery County, Virginia, where John A. Van Lear was born. When his father died in 1829 he left to him five volumes of “Scotts Bibles.” In 1817 he married his first wife, Sarah Davis, and following her death he married Jane A. Bell from the Augusta Stone congregation in 1826. After serving at the Locust Bottom Church at the Forks of the James, he came to the Mossy Creek area and became pastor of the church. Following his death in 1850, his widow and children continued to live in the area and were active in both church and community.<sup>19</sup>

The records of Mossy Creek Church give some information concerning the gradual growth of the role of women in church activities. One can only imagine the hardships of women in the early congregation as they faced dangers, disease, and death which were a part of life daily. The only early references in church records concerning females were in regard to membership. The first mention of active roles for them occurred in 1882 when several women were asked to assist in selecting library books for children. In the 1890s women were given responsibilities for raising funds for mission work and by the turn of the century organizations for them had been established. Yet it was quite clear that women’s roles, even within their own organizations, were limited. Associate male members were included in these early organizations to perform those tasks which women were not allowed to do. By 1917 many Sunday School teachers were women and the session decreed that they could perform all functions of the Sunday School except lead public prayers. In 1963 the Presbyterian Church U. S. changed its constitution to permit women to be ordained as pastors, elders, and deacons. Two decades later Mossy Creek Church elected its first woman as an ordained officer in the congregation..

Religious practices at Mossy Creek changed gradually. The theology and policy that guided such practice were stated in its creeds and Book of Order and applied to all churches in the denomination. Oversight by higher church courts insured general adherence to stated procedures and practices. Members from other religious and ethnic backgrounds were assimilated and some social change was accommodated, but the basic tenets of the church remained largely unchanged into the twentieth century.

Numerous economic, political, and social aspects of regional history also

impacted the lives of those who lived on Mossy Creek. The dependable, spring-fed waters of the Mossy Creek provided water power for a variety of industrial pursuits. Henry Miller, a German from Pennsylvania, established an iron furnace and forge on Mossy Creek before the American Revolution. Ore for the furnace was mined from the neighboring hillsides and wood for charcoal was secured from the surrounding area. A large mill pond was constructed to provide power for the furnace and forge and for a grist mill. Also, he operated a paper mill up stream from the furnace and near the church. Following Henry Miller’s death, the paper mill was operated by his son, James, in the early nineteenth century.<sup>20</sup> A second mill pond existed across from the church and powered another grist mill which in the middle nineteenth century was known as Kyles Mill. Whether this pond was used to support the Miller paper mill is unknown. These two mill ponds were referred to by local residents as the “upper dam” and the “lower dam.” Several miles up stream a third mill pond was located just below Mt. Solon and supported a grist mill, a fulling mill, and a hemp mill in the early 1800s. A paper mill also was in operation at this third pond in the 1850s.

Two members of the congregation who fought in the American Revolution can be identified. John Bell, whose gravestone stands in the Mossy Creek cemetery, served under General Peter Muhlenberg, and saw action in the tidewater area of Virginia. He was the son of James Bell, an early settler on the Long Glade.<sup>21</sup> Joseph Wooddell, the son of Thomas Wooddell and an elder in the Mossy Creek congregation, served two tours of duty during the struggle for independence from Great Britain. His first tour was concluded in New Jersey and his second tour was served in eastern Virginia.<sup>22</sup> Other individuals in the Mossy Creek area undoubtedly provided support to the war in a variety of ways.

The issue of slavery and the resulting American Civil War were dominant features of the history of both Mossy Creek Church and the surrounding community during the nineteenth century. Wills of church elders in the late eighteenth century indicate that some had acquired slaves. By 1814 the issue of slavery was impacting local church affairs at Mossy Creek. At that time the Reverend Andrew B. Davidson was serving the congregations at Mossy Creek, Cooks Creek, and Harrisonburg, but in that year the pastoral relationship between him and his congregations was dissolved because influential members of his congregations believed that certain aspects of his political beliefs were evident in his sermons. Davidson was active in the Virginia Tract Society and was operating a printing press in Harrisonburg with the Reverend George Bourne, pastor of a Presbyterian Church at Port Republic and an ardent abolitionist. While the Reverend Mr. Davidson does not appear to have been an abolitionist,

his relationship with the Reverend Mr. Bourne seems to have caused trouble in his congregation. Bourne made critical remarks on the floor of the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church in Philadelphia about the mistreatment of slaves by Presbyterian clergymen in Virginia. Lexington Presbytery brought charges against him when he would not name the clergymen whom he believed were guilty of the alleged mistreatment. A trial followed and correspondence between Davidson and Bourne was cited as evidence. One of Bourne's letters stated that "the Elders of Mossy Creek attempted to close the house of prayer," and "the doors were actually locked and an assault was threatened by the Negro stealing Tories."<sup>23</sup> While the details of these encounters can not be established from extant records, these comments indicate that the issue of slavery evoked strong feeling by that time.

Yet in 1826, Ruth Davies, who was associated with the congregation, freed her slaves in her will.<sup>24</sup> In 1833, one of these freed slaves, a man named Robin Hood, made a profession of faith at Mossy Creek. He was one of six African-Americans, some slave and some free, who were members of the congregation. In 1831 women in the community signed a memorial to the General Assembly of Virginia supporting general emancipation. Two years later another memorial, bearing both male and female signatures, requested the appropriation of state funds to support the Virginia Colonization Society which would transport freed blacks to Africa.<sup>25</sup> However, the 1850 census indicates that five of the six ruling elders at Mossy Creek held slaves. Many members of the congregation did not hold slaves but records do not indicate if they failed to do so because of opposition to the practice or because of economic factors.

When the on-going controversy over slavery culminated in the Civil War, the people of the Mossy Creek area gave strong support to the Confederate cause. Many men in the community joined either the 5<sup>th</sup> Virginia Infantry, the 52<sup>nd</sup> Virginia Infantry, or other units and saw action in many of the major battles in the east. Some must have marched by the church in May of 1862 when Stonewall Jackson's army returned to the Valley from the Battle of McDowell. Jed Hotchkiss, a former member of the congregation who was on Jackson's staff, noted in his journal that "they were burying young Harmon as we passed Mossy Creek Church." Harmon was a member of the congregation killed at McDowell. A total of twenty-seven men associated with the congregation were identified as having lost their lives in the war and many are buried in the church cemetery. Conditions were also difficult for those at home. In 1865 the Reverend John Pinkerton, a native of Pennsylvania who served the congregation during the Civil War, was being paid \$7,000 in Confederate money. A year later when

U.S. currency was in use, he was paid \$500. Also, in 1866 the board of trustees requested a member near the church to place his sheep in the graveyard several days a week "to keep down the brush and briers."

Some degree of economic stability must have been achieved quickly. Within twelve years of Virginia's readmission to the Union the congregation completed two of the largest construction efforts in its history. By 1873 when the Reverend John Rosebro became pastor of the church, a manse had been erected. Nine years later in 1882 the present gothic structure was completed and replaced the fourth church, a brick building, constructed in 1843. The new structure must have been one of the largest buildings in the northern part of Augusta County. The present church building is the fifth structure used by the congregation as a house of worship.

The evolution of education in the region is reflected in the history of the Mossy Creek area. Prior to the end of Reconstruction, Virginia had no public school system and parents were responsible for providing education for their children. Some children were educated at home and others attended numerous primary schools organized by parents. Those who desired education beyond the primary level and who could afford the tuition could take advantage of classical schools such as the one conducted by the Reverend John Hendren near Mossy Creek in the 1830s.

In 1847 Jed Hotchkiss, a young man from Windsor, New York, sought a night's lodging at the home of Daniel Forrer, who was then owner of the iron furnace and forge. During the course of his visit his host learned that Hotchkiss was a teacher. After some discussion Forrer arranged for Hotchkiss to stay with the family and to instruct his children. Soon other families desired the services of the young teacher and the school grew. By 1852 the Mossy Creek Academy Association had been formed and by 1854 a building forty-two feet wide and sixty-six feet long had been constructed for the school. Hotchkiss believed that the academy would prosper even more if boarding students were accepted and soon a dormitory was built which housed both the boarding students and the Hotchkiss family.<sup>26</sup>

The academy had both a primary and academical or secondary department and offered instruction in the classics, modern languages, chemistry, mathematics, bookkeeping, and religious instruction of a nonsectarian nature. Students were required to attend church either at Mossy Creek or another church of their choosing. The day started at 5 a.m. and concluded at 9 p.m. Eight-five males and twenty-four females were enrolled during the 1856-1857 session.<sup>27</sup>

While the academy had no official relationship to Mossy Creek Church,

about half of the academy association members and its trustees were members of the congregation. Hotchkiss became a member of Mossy Creek Church in May of 1853 and Sara Comfort Hotchkiss, whom he married later in the same year, joined the congregation in 1854. Both of their infant daughters were baptized at Mossy Creek. Six months after becoming a member, Hotchkiss was appointed to the board of trustees of the church. Until he sold his interest in the academy in 1858 he was very active in the affairs of the church. After leaving Mossy Creek he settled briefly at Stribling Springs and then established his home in Churchville. During the Civil War he gained fame as Stonewall Jackson's cartographer. Following the war he resided in Staunton and was active in numerous economic enterprises.

The academy enjoyed a good reputation and continued to operate until the Civil War. In February of 1865 the academy building burned and The Rockingham Register, a Harrisonburg newspaper, observed that "it was undoubtedly the work of some vile incendiary" but no details which would link it to the concluding events of the Civil War were given. Following the Civil War, public schools were established in Virginia and in 1878 the land upon which the academy was located was sold to Augusta County as the site for a two-room public school. The public school closed in the early 1900s and was converted later to a private dwelling.

With the exception of Abraham Smith few of the members of the early



Graves of Mossy Creek Civil War soldiers.



The present Mossy Creek Presbyterian Church in an earlier era.

congregation at Mossy Creek appear in Augusta County records as political leaders. Smith, was born in Ulster in 1722 and was active in the organization of the Mossy Church. He held the rank of lieutenant colonel during the Indian Wars and served as a justice first in Augusta County and later in Rockingham County.<sup>28</sup> During the nineteenth century four members of the congregation represented the area in the House of Delegates of the Virginia General Assem-

bly. John M. Estill, son-in-law of Henry Miller, the iron maker, was an elder at Mossy Creek and served in the House of Delegates for the 1820-1821 session and for the 1825-1826 session. John Givens Fulton, a member of the Board of Trustees served in the House of Delegates during the 1844-1845 session. John Marshall McCue, the son of James McCue and the grandson of the Reverend John McCue, was elected to the House of Delegates for the 1848-1849 session and continued to serve until the close of the Civil War.<sup>29</sup> McCue was an ardent supporter of the Confederacy and lost all of his wealth following the conflict, but remained active in a variety of political and civic affairs following the war. D. Newton Van Lear, son of the Reverend John A. Van Lear, was elected to the House of Delegates in 1878 and served the church as a trustee.<sup>30</sup> John Paul of Rockingham County, who later was a U.S. congressman from the Valley, was listed in membership rolls for several years near the close of the Civil War, but there is no record of him being active in the church. Members of the family of Charles T. O'Ferrall, Governor of Virginia from 1894 to 1898, were affiliated with the congregation. His mother, Jane T. O'Ferrall, was a member for four years during the 1870s. The future governor attended the dedication of the present church building in 1882. Other members of the congregation held county offices during the twentieth century.

The difficulty of transporting agricultural and industrial products to market was a constant factor in Valley life beginning in the colonial period. Progress was made in alleviating these difficulties in the 1830s with the construction of turnpikes. The Harrisonburg to Warm Springs Turnpike was established in 1830 and approximated the location of State Route 42 in the Mossy Creek area. In 1837 the General Assembly of Virginia chartered the Staunton to Iron Works Turnpike which probably followed the current location of State Route 613 from Staunton to Mossy Creek.<sup>31</sup> The actual construction of this road has not been documented, but land records adjacent to its probable site refer to the "turnpike" and local tradition supports the conclusion that it was built.

The most significant improvement to transportation in the Mossy Creek area occurred in 1902 when the Chesapeake and Western Railroad was completed from Elkton, through Harrisonburg and Bridgewater, to Stokesville at the foot of the mountains to the west. The new railroad passed the site of the old ironworks and ran within several hundred yards of Mossy Creek Church. The railroad management soon realized that the large mill pond near the iron works was an attractive site for those seeking an outing in the country. Therefore, an amusement park offering a band pavilion, swimming, and boat rides was established. Trains from Harrisonburg brought people to the park for a day

of recreation on what were billed as "Wild Flower Excursions." The Bridgewater Herald reported that over 3,000 were in attendance at Mossy Creek Park on July 4, 1905. Since the Chesapeake and Western was linked with other major Valley railroads, it greatly enhanced the ability of local residents to travel and to ship wheat and other farm products to market. By 1933 the existence of improved roads, the advent of the automobile, and the depletion of timber supplies in the mountains led the railroad to discontinue service in the Mossy Creek area.

In the 1920s the area had a rich rural community life built around the Mossy Creek depot and store, the church, and the two mill ponds. When conditions permitted ice skating on the mill ponds was a favorite winter pastime and ice was cut and stored in ice houses. During this period Mossy Creek Church reached its highest level of membership and was operating chapels in the villages of Sangerville and Moscow. However, the Great Depression and World War II reduced the population and many moved from the area to seek jobs elsewhere. The upper mill pond was drained in the 1930s and the lower dam failed in 1949. As one elderly resident observed, "there used to be the upper dam people and the lower dam people, but now there are no dam people at all."

At the beginning of the twenty-first century the community surrounding the winding stream continues to undergo change. Modern homes dot the hillsides as new residents seek to enjoy the pastoral beauty of the area and fly fishermen seek the brown trout in the cold waters of the stream. While portions of the railroad bed are still visible, the site of the iron furnace lies beneath dense undergrowth and the site of the mill ponds serve either as farm land or home sites. Yet each Sunday morning the bell in the steeple of Mossy Creek Church tolls as a reminder of the rich heritage left by past generations who have lived, worked, and worshiped on the banks of the Mossy Creek.

#### Endnotes

<sup>1</sup> Records of the Synod of Virginia, The Presbyterian Church in the United States: The Official Records and the Related Historical Material of the Synod of Virginia and Its Constituent Churches on microfilm at Union Seminary, Richmond, Va., Howard M. Wilson, Ed. Richmond, Va., The Synod of Virginia, 1970. Reels 67 and 68, Mossy Creek Church. All references to the history of Mossy Creek Church are taken from these records unless otherwise indicated.

<sup>2</sup> "Old Minute Book of Cooks Creek, Peaked Mountain, and Harrisonburg Presbyterian Churches" on microfilm at First Presbyterian Church, Harrisonburg, Va. and Richard K. MacMaster, "The Session Book of Peaked Mountain and Cook's Creek Presbyterian Churches," Augusta Historical Bulletin, Vol. 20, No. 2, Fall 1984, 71-75.

<sup>3</sup> Encyclopedia of the Presbyterian Church in the United States of America, Alferd Neven, Ed. (Philadelphia, Pa.: Presbyterian Encyclopedia Publishing Co., 1884), 551-554.

<sup>4</sup> Minutes of Hanover Presbytery, on microfilm, 1, 1755-1769, 111a-112a.

<sup>5</sup> Ibid., 4.

<sup>6</sup> Ibid., 17-18.

<sup>7</sup> Records of Augusta County Virginia, Deed Book 19:524 and Deed Book 13:415; and The Highland Recorder, Monterey, Va., 11 June 1964.

<sup>8</sup> Minutes of Hanover Presbytery, II, 1769-1785, 12-25.

<sup>9</sup> Philip Vickers Fithian, Journal, 1775-1776, Edited by Robert Greenhalgh Albion and Leonidas Dodson (Princeton, New Jersey, 1934), 179-180.





The most significant improvement to transportation in the Mossy Creek area occurred in 1902 when the Chesapeake and Western Railroad was completed.

<sup>10</sup> Minutes of Hanover Presbytery, II, 1769-1785, 103-111. Numerous spellings of the surname Erwin exist in church and secular records. Others spellings include Irvine, Ervine, and Ervin. Benjamin Erwin used several variations in signing his name on different occasions.

<sup>11</sup> Rockingham County Records, Marriage Bond Book A:41.

<sup>12</sup> Records of Madison County Kentucky, Will Book E:267.

<sup>13</sup> Minutes of Lexington Presbytery, on microfilm, I, 1786-1789, 13-18.

<sup>14</sup> See Leigh Eric Smith, *Holy Fairs: Scottish and American Revivalism in the Early Modern Period* (Princeton, N.J., Princeton University Press, 1989) and John W. Wayland, *Historic Harrisonburg* (Harrisonburg, Va.: C.J. Carrier, Co., 1949) presents an eyewitness account of a communion service in Harrisonburg during the pastorate of Benjamin Erwin on p. 14.

<sup>15</sup> Joseph A. Waddell, *Annals of Augusta County* (Harrisonburg, Va.: C.J. Carrier Company, 1986 Second Edition), 337; and Jed Hotchkiss and Joseph Waddell, *Historical Atlas of Augusta County Virginia* (Chicago, Ill.: Waterman Watkins and Co., 1885) reproduced by the Augusta County Historical Society, 80-81.

<sup>16</sup> "Emmanuel/St. Paul Lutheran Church, 1803-1856, Mt. Solon, Virginia," Photocopies of Some Original Records, Historical Collection, Eastern Mennonite University, Harrisonburg, Va.

<sup>17</sup> Charles Herbert Huffman, *The St. Michael's Story* (Verona, Va.: The McClure Printing Co., 1972), 29.

<sup>18</sup> Minutes of Lexington Presbytery (on microfilm) 4, 1800-1810, 333.

<sup>19</sup> Unpublished genealogical data provide by Mary Ann Vaughn, Staunton, Va., 1997; Records of Montgomery County Virginia, Will Book 4:490 and Marriage Register A:142; and William Henry Foote, *Sketches of Virginia, Historical and Biographical, Second Series, Second Edition* (J.P. Lippincott and Co., 1856), 38-39.

<sup>20</sup> James W. Wilson, "The Mossy Creek Area of Augusta County Virginia During the Eighteenth Century," unpublished Masters Thesis, James Madison University, August, 1993.

<sup>21</sup> Howard M. Wilson, *Great Valley Patriots: Western Virginia in the Struggle for Liberty* (Verona, Va.: The McClure Press, 1976), 179 and 186.

<sup>22</sup> General Services Administration, National Archives and Records Service, File S11883.

<sup>23</sup> Minutes of Lexington Presbytery, 6, 1814-1816, 69-73.

<sup>24</sup> Dorothy Boyd-Rush, *Register of Freed Blacks, Rockingham County, 1807-1859* (Bowie, Md.: Heritage Books, Inc., 1992), 45.

<sup>25</sup> Tom Blair, "The Augusta-Rockingham Area as a Mirror of Virginia's Struggle over Slavery" in *Selected Rockingham County Petitions, 1800-1850* (Harrisonburg, Va.: Good Printers Inc., 1983), 148-155.

<sup>26</sup> Peter W. Roper, *Jed Hotchkiss: Rebel Mapmaker and Virginia Business Man* (Shippensburg, Pa.: The White Mane Publishing Co., 1992), 6-9. Mossy Creek Academy Association, Folder 2095, Business/Industrial documents, 1816-1850, Rockingham Historical Society (Va.), Special Collections, Carrier Library, James Madison University, Harrisonburg, Va.

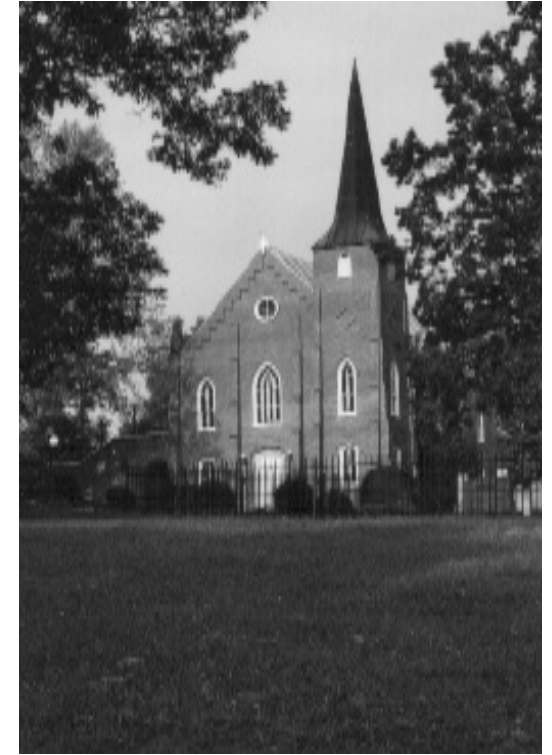
<sup>27</sup> *Catalogue of Mossy Creek Academy, 1856-1857* (Harrisonburg, Va.: John W. Wartman and Co., 1857), photocopy.

<sup>28</sup> William F. Booger, *Gleanings of Virginia History* (Washington, D.C.: William Fletcher Booger, 1903), 339-340.

<sup>29</sup> The General Assembly of Virginia July 30, 1619-January 1, 1978: *A Bicentennial Register of Members* (Richmond, Va.: The Virginia State Library, 1978), 303, 328, 408, 412, 430, 435, 443, 464, and 469.

<sup>30</sup> Richard K. MacMaster, *Augusta County History, 1865-1950* (Augusta County Historical Society, 1988), 56.

<sup>31</sup> *Acts of the General Assembly of Virginia Passed in 1836-37 in the Sixty-Fifth Year of the Commonwealth* (Richmond, Va.: Thomas Ritchie, Printer to the Commonwealth, 1837), 148-149.



Present-day Mossy Creek Presbyterian Church



# Daniel Womelsdorff at Mossy Creek, 1795-1804

By Carole Womeldorf Komarek

The inscription on Mary Womeldorff's gravestone in the Mt. Zion Cemetery near Gallipolis, Ohio, is slowly disintegrating. However, it provided the clue that led to learning about her husband Daniel's last years on Mossy Creek at Henry Miller's mill.

The late Mildred Smith, Womelsdorff<sup>1</sup> family historian, visited the cemetery in 1965. She noted, "Mary's stone is in poor condition but enough words were visible to make out widow or wife of Daniel buried at Mossy Creek." She reconstructed the inscription. The underlined words are those presumed to have been on the stone in its original state. The words Mossy Creek were visible in 1965 but twenty years later only the word Mossy was legible on that line.

In Memory of Mary Womeldorff  
Who departed this life April  
17 1821 aged 70 years  
\_\_\_\_ wife of Daniel  
Womeldorff who died Oct  
7 1804 aged 61 years and  
\_\_\_\_ buried at Mossy Creek  
Meeting House, Augusta  
County Virginia

In 1744, Daniel's father, also Daniel, built a mill on Manatawny Creek in Amity Township in eastern Berks County, Pennsylvania. The mill served as a fulling, grist, and paper mill. Benjamin Franklin purchased paper from the mill for his printing and publishing enterprise in Philadelphia. In 1750, Franklin loaned Daniel Womelsdorff, Sr., £100 pounds to improve the paper mill. The same year, Daniel, Sr., and his eldest son, John, purchased land in western Berks that John later developed into a town that became known as Womelsdorf. After Daniel, Sr.'s death in 1759, his son, Daniel, continued to operate the family paper mill.

Berks County records indicate that Daniel Womelsdorff, Jr., and Mary Warren were married in 1773 in Amity Township. Their children were Eleanor, George, Daniel, and Michael were also born in Berks. Oley Valley Heritage by



Phillip Pendleton includes the Warren and Sadowski families in his list of immigrants to the valley from New York and New Jersey. These families intermarried with their Miller, Boone, and Womelsdorff neighbors.

Henry Miller (mentioned in the previous article about Mossy Creek) was also born and raised in Amity Township. He was not only a neighbor of the Womelsdorffs, but he was distantly related to Mary Warren Womelsdorff. He was also a boyhood friend of Daniel Boone—who was from the Oley Valley near Amity—and apprenticed to Squire Boone to learn the blacksmith trade. Miller is presumed to have joined Squire Boone and his family when they left Berks County for Augusta County, Virginia, in 1750. Henry Miller's uncle, Increase Miller, and James Warren (Mary Warren Womelsdorff's grandfather) married daughters of Antoni Sadowski, Ann and Justina respectively. Henry Miller returned to Pennsylvania in





1800	Jan 15	To Cash to Womelsdorff for order	3	80
	Jan 22	To Cash to Cutting Tools 10/- Cash of	1	40
	March 16	To Cash to Daniel Womelsdorff	2	00
	March 23	To Printing 50 Handbills for M <sup>r</sup> W <sup>m</sup> Miller's Home, for M <sup>r</sup> Gellam	0	90
			1	10

021	James Miller Paper Maker			
	Aug 2 <sup>nd</sup> 79	To Cash at the Office	"	18 "
	Aug 3 <sup>rd</sup> 79	To Cash for self at Office	1	10 "
	Sept 27 <sup>th</sup> 79	To Cash for William Miller	3	12 "
	Dec 27 <sup>th</sup> 79	To Cash for Samuel Miller	3	" "
	Jan 1 <sup>st</sup> 80	To Cash at Office (a Guinea) for self	1	06 "

It is clear from these ledger pages that James Miller was operating a paper mill and is identified as a "Paper Maker" in the bottom example. The top example shows several transactions with Daniel Womelsdorff.

square and two stories high, with a cellar; an office and store house, together with stables and all necessary out buildings for carrying on the iron business.

Miller, Boone, and Winter family descendants are working with evidence from the Lyman Draper Collection (in the Wisconsin Historical Society) to clarify the Boone genealogy. In the process of gathering research, however, an interesting side note about the Womelsdorff family and their craft as papermakers has been uncovered. The collection includes Draper's correspondence, research notes, and contemporary maps and documents gathered in the course of writing histories and biographies. The many topics in the collection include the American Revolution, Lewis and Clark Expedition, and Daniel Boone. Draper's correspondence with Miller and Boone descendants and local historians dates from the late 1880s—before that generation's first-hand memories of family traditions had faded. Also included in the Boone/Miller correspondence are many references to the Miller ironworks and the paper mill on Mossy Creek. Henning's Statutes at Large, the collection of Virginia's laws, notes that a Gideon Morgan and Peter Burchardt were authorized in 1790 to hold a lottery to finance the building of a paper mill near Staunton, Augusta County, Virginia. Local records of the time do not reveal who received the funding. However, it is estimated that Henry Miller had built a paper mill along Mossy Creek in the late 1780s. The

mill was located "about one mile up the creek above the furnace near Mossy Creek Church," according to Marshall McCue in his 1887 correspondence with historian Lyman Draper. McCue's sketch has the paper mill on the bank opposite the church. Mossy Creek winds from its source near Mt. Solon six miles to the border of Augusta and Rockingham Counties to the North River on the western side of the Shenandoah Valley. With its year-round supply of clear spring-fed water, it was an ideal site for the paper mill. There was also enough water power to supply several water wheels downstream.

In 1787 back in Amity, George Boone purchased the Womelsdorff paper mill and fifty acres for £1,061 pounds. At the same time, Henry Miller would have been looking for someone to operate his paper mill on Mossy Creek. It can be assumed that he knew Daniel Womelsdorff as an expert papermaker with years of experience. The process of paper making was carried out by hand and required the work of several specially trained and skilled workers. Daniel Womelsdorff and his family moved to Augusta County, and by 1795 he was operating the Miller paper mill. When Henry Miller died in 1798, the paper mill and a plantation of four hundred acres on both sides of the creek went to his son, James. From that point, Daniel Womelsdorff worked for James Miller.

There are only three clues pinpointing the Womelsdorffs in Augusta County. No family member apparently owned land in the county as the Womelsdorff name does not appear in any deed or on any land tax list. The family may have lived in dwelling rooms in the mill or in a house owned by the Millers. In addition to the fading tombstone in Ohio, the other two pieces of evidence are the Augusta County Personal Property Tax Lists 1795-1806 and the Wise Ledger (found in the University of Virginia's special collections) to document the family in Augusta. On the tax list, Daniel and his three sons are recorded. They were taxed on two to four horses during their years at the mill. After Daniel's death in 1804, Mary, his widow, was listed as the head of the household. In 1806, just before the surviving family members moved to Ohio, sons George and Daniel were taxed as heads of household and paid an additional tax for their younger brother Michael.

By far the most important source to provide insight in the life of an eighteenth-century papermaker was the Wise ledger. Understanding the basics of colonial papermaking and paper mills helps in the interpretation of the Wise account book. Jane Levis Carter, in *The Paper Makers: Early Pennsylvanians and Their Water Mills* says:

Converting a former grist or other water mill to paper making was primarily a matter of changing the inner machinery. From the exterior, the

major difference was in a double millrace, a portion of which fed water to the wheel; the remainder provided a settling pond. This ensured a supply of clean water for mixing the pulp.

The water wheel's tremendous shaft, usually a white oak trunk, was geared to stampers of heavy oak, set with iron teeth to fray the softened rags in an open trough. Later Hollander beaters came into use; whatever the method, the dim interior of an old mill must have been an encagement in noise and heat—the constant sea-splash of the great wheel, the groans and creaks of the gearings, the thudding stampers, the vaporous vats. . . . There was a constant movement of men owning but not managing mills; managers going from mill to mill; buyings and sellings of mills; deaths; failures. In a population itself constantly in a state of flux, paper makers especially seemed as restless as the waters that tumbled through their mills.

The mill at Mossy Creek was intended to supply local printers, but especially John Wise (Weiss). He was born in Frederick, Maryland, in 1773 and probably learned the printing trade there in the German-English print shops. By 1794, he was a sergeant in Major General Anthony Wayne's army. He saw action in the Battle of Maumee in the Indian Campaign. Wise left the army in 1795 and moved to Staunton to manage the printing of the Virginia Gazette and Staunton Weekly Advertiser, owned and published by Robert Douthat. Eventually, Wise became sole owner and publisher of the paper. In 1798, he renamed the paper The Phenix and gave it a banner inspired by Pennsylvania German folk art motifs. Wise's ledger, now at the University of Virginia, also mentions his "German paper" published weekly in the German language from about 1800 to 1804, but there are no extant examples. Subscribers and advertisers to the German paper were in Augusta and Albemarle Counties with a subscription cost of nine shillings. In addition to printing the weeklies, Wise printed handbills and pamphlets in both English and German. He printed a few books and booklets, but only those in English have been found. In August 1803, The Phenix appeared as owned by J. Wise and I. Woodruff. Two months later, Ira Woodruff was listed as sole editor and publisher. Wise had apparently left the printing trade for the opportunity to operate a stage line and postal service in Augusta.

The ledger documents Wise's transactions from 1797 to 1802 and includes many entries pertaining to James Miller and Daniel Womelsdorff. Miller and his brothers, for instance, would offset printing and advertising costs against deliveries of paper from his mill. Despite a 1799 Augusta County Tax Delinquent List that shows Daniel Womelsdorff as insolvent and having moved to Albemarle County, the ledger shows reams of paper were still being delivered by Womelsdorff from the mill and cash was being drawn by James Miller. The Womelsdorffs also continued to pay their personal property taxes in Augusta through 1806.

In 1797, Wise received from Womelsdorff twenty-four reams of printing paper and three reams of writing paper; in 1798, twenty-three reams of printing paper at fifteen shillings and one ream of writing paper at ten shillings; in 1799, ten reams of printing and one ream of writing paper. It is possible that the Wise ledger records only a portion of the mill's production. A ream of paper now contains 500 sheets—formerly 480 sheets. The size of the paper sheet used for printing The Phenix in 1799 was about 40 x 51.5 centimeters. Each sheet was formed by hand in a mold and the output of printing paper that could have been used in the printing shop from 1797 to 1799 was, conceivably, 34,000 sheets.

Historian Klaus Wust interprets the Wise ledger to mean that Wise's debt contributed to the failure of the mill about the time in 1804 when Wise was selling his printing business. The physical demands at the mill and its financial pressures must have taken their toll upon sixty-year-old Daniel Womelsdorff as well. He died in 1804 and—according to his wife's gravestone—was buried near Mossy Creek Church..

Mossy Creek Presbyterian Church was founded in 1770 by Scotch-Irish immigrants to the Shenandoah Valley. No records for this period have been found. Lists of members or burials may not have been kept, or they may have been lost over time. The first records found begin in 1811. The building in use today is the fifth place of worship. It was the second church—a log structure—that was in use from about 1787 to 1811 and could have been the one attended by the Womelsdorffs. It was said that the one- to two-hour services were particularly uncomfortable during the winter when the frosty air seeped in through the unchinked and undaubed log walls.

The Mossy Creek burial ground was first mentioned in a 1787 deed, and it has been maintained by the church since that time. As the years passed, and the church buildings were replaced, they were always located near the boundaries of the cemetery. A list of gravestones in the old portion has been published in A History of Mossy Creek Presbyterian Church by Charles W. Blair. Only a handful of gravestones remains that would have been contemporary to the time of Daniel Womelsdorff's burial. Whether there were few tombstones used at that time, or whether they have not survived time because of weather or vandalism is unknown. Many markers at that time were also made of wood and few have survived.

Blair states in a letter to the writer:

The second church was near the stream and close to the spring at the base of the hill below the present church building. This structure was probably not more than 100-200 feet from the oldest portion of the present cemetery.

Tradition and land records suggest that it was in use from about 1787 until after 1812. You are correct in your belief that the second church building and all subsequent buildings were constructed around the edge of the cemetery.

I am not sure of the exact location of the paper mill but there was an old mill pond across the stream from the church where a flour mill was located in the 19<sup>th</sup> century. The paper mill was probably near that location and the pond may have been built to support the paper mill. A portion of the old stone dam still stands today. The area has not experienced "urban sprawl." New homes have been built in recent years but the area near the church remains pastoral in nature. The stream itself is a "catch and release" fly fishing stream with an international reputation for the fine brown trout which grow in its waters. Yet, the pressure of development exists and how long these conditions will remain is uncertain. I live on a hill overlooking the site of the paper mill and hope that development can be avoided.

It is reassuring to learn that Daniel Womelsdorff's final resting place is in peaceful surroundings near the timeless, moving waters of Mossy Creek.

#### Endnote

<sup>1</sup>The surname Womelsdorff is also spelled variously Womeldorf, Womeldorff, and Womelsdorf. In Pennsylvania, the town is spelled Womelsdorf. For consistency's sake, except for the transcription on Mary Womelsdorf's tombstone, the surname will be spelled Womelsdorff in this paper.

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#### RELATED GENEALOGY

##### WARREN FAMILY

JOHN WARREN, SR. was born about 1672 in Brookhaven, L.I. NY and died 1733 in Amity, Philadelphia County (now Berks) Pennsylvania

Children:

John Warren Jr., born about 1696, Oyster Bay, L.I., NY, died 1734, Amity, Philadelphia County Pennsylvania

Elizabeth Warren, born about 1698, Oyster Bay, L.I., New York

JAMES WARREN born about 1700, Oyster Bay, L.I., New York, died between 1730-1731, Amity, Phila.Co, Pennsylvania

Jacob Warren born about 1703, Oyster Bay, L.I., New York, died about Feb 1770, Augusta County, Virginia

Abijah Warren born about 1707, Oyster Bay, L.I., New York

Michael Warren, Sr., born 15 July 1711, Oyster Bay, L.I., New York, died 24 Feb 1795, Rockingham County Virginia

JAMES WARREN born about 1700 in Oyster Bay, L.I., New York, died between 1730-1731 Amity

Married Justina Sadowski, daughter of Antoni and Mary Bird Sadwoski about 1721.

Children:

James Warren born about 1722, Amity, Philadelphia County (now Berks) Pennsylvania

John Warren born about 1731, Amity

Source: Descendants of Christopher Waring, online <http://daniel.hypermart.net/roach/waring.htm>

St. Gabriel's Church, Douglassville, Amity, Berks, Pennsylvania

James Warin son of James and Justine born 3 May 1722 baptized 28 Sept 1735

John Warin son of James and Justine born 1731

Ann Warren daughter of John and Ellin, born 21 Aug 1753, baptized 25 Dec. 1765

Mary Warren born 9 May 1756, baptized 25 Dec 1765 by the Rev. Mr. Alex Murray, (presumably of the parents above)

Mary Warren married Daniel Womelsdorf 31 Aug 1773

Will of John Warren, Amity 5 Dec 1771-15 Dec 1772, Vol. 2-119, Berks County, Pennsylvania

Plantation in Amity and all other estate to be sold and divided between daughters Ann and Mary and if they should die unmarried, to my brother James Warren's sons. Extrs.

Dau. Ann and friend Abjiah Sands, Wit. Samuel Jones, William Jones.

#### SADOWSKI/SANDUSKY FAMILY

(Anthony Sadowski, Antoni Sadowski) born about 1669 (probably Poland) died 22 April 1736 Douglassville, Berks County, Pennsylvania. Married Marya Bordt (Mary Bird) born 1685/1690 Mespath Kills, L.I. New York, died about 1742 Romney, Parsons Creek, West Virginia.

Children: include Justina Sadowski, daughter of Anthony and Mary married James Warren about 1721; Anna Sadowski, daughter of Anthony and Mary married Increase Miller about 1732

\*\*United States President Gerald Ford's descent from Antoni Sadowski

Source: <http://hum.amu.edu.pl/~rafalp/POL-AM/ford-sandusky.htm>\_ Rafel T. Prinke, PhD. November 2000

# The Struggle for Civil Rights in Staunton and Augusta County

By Josie Dull

Josie Dull is a senior history major in the Adult Degree Program at Mary Baldwin College. This article is her senior thesis.

Was Staunton, Virginia, too small for its inhabitants to feel the impact of the civil rights movement? Did the same movement that set fire to Mississippi, Alabama, Georgia, and even Virginia miss being ignited in Staunton? The transition from segregation to desegregation in Staunton, Virginia, went smoothly because, prior to the movement, everyone in Staunton, white and black, seemed to accept his or her "place" in society and racial boundaries were not crossed. Even though black families did place their children in white schools after the monumental 1954 court decision *Brown v. Board of Education*, this court decision did not create locally the degree of racial tension spreading throughout the state and country in the era of desegregation. Yet ministers, educators, and others in the local African-American community, as well some whites, risked speaking up for civil rights. The risks could, for some people, be considerable. The purpose of this paper is not an extensive description of the civil rights movement in Staunton and nearby areas, but, rather, it is a personal look at the events that occurred.

The Civil Rights Acts of 1866, 1870, 1871, and 1875 were the first attempts by Congress to bring a change to the political and legal status of African-Americans. These acts granted African-Americans freedoms that previously had been denied them. Such freedoms as the right to sue and be sued, to give evidence, and to hold real and personal property were addressed. After the passing of the Fourteenth Amendment, the Enforcement Act of 1870 tried to guarantee the social rights of African-Americans by penalizing innkeepers, proprietors of public establishments and owners of public conveyances for discriminating against blacks. Nevertheless, the U.S. Supreme Court ruled in 1883 that the legislation was not valid.<sup>1</sup> The setbacks certainly outnumbered the gains as African-Americans tried, throughout the next century, to obtain civil rights



equal to whites in a white-dominated country.

The theory of separate-but-equal was adopted in the 1896 Plessy v. Ferguson court decision, and many southern states used the Plessy decision as a means to oppress blacks. Enacting Jim Crow Laws that were discriminatory and oppressive to blacks, southern politicians ultimately succeeded in wiping out any gains made by African-Americans during Reconstruction. Later, many white Southerners viewed the historic decision of Brown v. Board of Education of Topeka, Kansas, as just another slap from the federal government, the very same government that, according to southern politicians, had weakened states' rights. Sparking massive racial tensions in the South, this decision invalidated the separate but equal precedent and threatened the social and economic power of whites by diminishing the power of the Jim Crow Laws.

Staunton was clearly a racially segregated community in the 1950s and 1960s. Schools, churches, parks, mortuaries, and residential areas, for example, were racially segregated. The city directories of Staunton in the 1950s even indicated which public institutions were restricted to blacks only by placing a small letter "c" (which stood for "colored") next to the listing of these places. Staunton was not without its bigots in the era of the civil rights movement, although sensational acts of racist hostility were not evident in Staunton.<sup>2</sup>

In the nation at large, the Ku Klux Klan opposed equal and fair treatment of blacks and intimidated civil rights activists. The philosophy of the Klan was white supremacy; it often used violence and terror as a means to oppress blacks. This organization opposed blacks obtaining full rights as American citizens and used every means possible to keep them from voting and receiving an education. Black sympathizers as well as black citizens were often beaten, threatened, or even murdered by Klansmen who wore white hoods to hide their identities. In the 1960s, Klan activists began a wave of terror equal to the one that followed Reconstruction. President Lyndon B. Johnson, using the Federal Bureau of Investigation, was able to send some Klan members to prison. The killings of three civil rights leaders, and the bombing of an Alabama church, which killed four black girls, were attributed to the workings of the Klan.<sup>3</sup> These crimes of hate by the KKK reveal the situation blacks endured during the civil rights movement. Not only were they battling the government to ensure passage and enforcement of new laws guaranteeing them the same rights as whites, but they were also battling the hatred of white supremacists associated with the Klan. Though dramatic violence did not occur in Staunton and Augusta County, the Klan was active there nonetheless during the 1960s.

In downtown Staunton near the Dixie Theater, an insurance agency em-

ployed three men. One employee recalled for the author the ardent prejudices of one of the insurance agents. She stated that his prejudices were so deep-rooted that he would turn his chair around when a person of color walked into the insurance office. She describes her profound experience upon learning that this agent was a devoted member of the KKK:

I had not worked there long until [Mr. X] began spouting off about some KKK meeting. "Do you mean the Ku Klux Klan?" I asked timidly, falling right into his plan. He jumped up, ran over and handed me one of the sheets, and for the next fifteen minutes, he paced the floor excitedly talking about an upcoming Klan rally he would be attending. I looked at horror at the flyer in my hand. I felt sick in the pit of my stomach to realize that this was a real situation... not a movie; not a dream, but real hatred for another race of people, and there I was face to face with it. [Agent Y] was out of the office on an errand, and as soon as he opened the door and walked in, [Mr. X] went back to his seat behind the desk. "What's he been up to?" asked [Agent Y]. "The Klan," he said, non-judgmentally. "You leave us out of your dirty dealings," Agent Y said firmly to Mr. X; "and you leave this girl alone." Mr. X replied, in a gruff voice with a curled lip, "Don't be surprised if you find a cross burning in your yard, Mr. high and mighty..."

The secretary remembered the signs that the KKK member would have in the office and the gleam in his eye when he spoke of the organization.

The National Association for the Advancement of Colored People was formed in 1910 to end racial discrimination and segregation. The organization devised ways to achieve political and social equality for blacks. The post-World War II years witnessed a revival of civil rights activities as the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People filed lawsuits to stop restrictions on African-American admission to graduate and professional schools and to stop restrictions on the right to purchase real estate anywhere regardless of local ordinances or custom. The Staunton chapter of the NAACP was first organized in 1948 under the direction of Rev. T.J. Jemison, the pastor of the Mount Zion Baptist Church. The focus of the organization in 1950 was to ensure equal rights and fair opportunity in the work place and the schools of the community.<sup>4</sup> The Staunton chapter also launched a lawsuit to assert African-American rights to fair police procedures. In one instance, the Staunton Police Department was charged with police brutality. The NAACP reported that the police, while making an arrest, injured two local black men. The NAACP agreed to defend the two men. Although they lost the case in court, those involved, especially the NAACP, regarded it as a moral victory because the jury was unable to reach a verdict. Through the efforts of the NAACP, Police Department personnel in later years were required to go through sensitivity training.<sup>5</sup> The case involving charges of rough treatment by police demonstrated the underlying racial tension between

the white and black citizens of Staunton in the 1950s.

On August 8, 1963, the Staunton Branch of the NAACP, led by the clergy of several African-American churches in Staunton, approached Staunton City Council concerning several matters. The list of demands it brought to council was as follows:

1. Access to all public accommodations and
2. The immediate passage of an ordinance by the City Council to bring about equal opportunities for employment in city government; business, industry and public utilities.
3. The immediate formulation and adoption of a plan by the city and county which would speed desegregation of the entire school system.
4. The abolition of unlawful practicing of restricted housing.
5. The privilege of having any other racial grievances discussed with City Council or Community Relations Committee.

The Reverend James O. Powell, Chairman, Direct Action Committee, Staunton Branch NAACP, the Reverend James Henry Scott, Pastor of Ebenezer Baptist Church and the Reverend Terry Burly, Pastor of Augusta Street Methodist Church, submitted the above requests. All three ministers addressed council briefly about their demands. A motion was unanimously carried that the requests of the NAACP be forwarded to the Staunton Community Commission. The Staunton Community Commission did not readily make progress on the issues presented by the Reverend Mr. Powell. The commission and four members of council discussed the appointment of a Negro to the Staunton School Board, the urgent need to reevaluate the curriculum offered to black students, and the integration of restaurants. The Reverend Mr. Powell noted in the News-Leader that the school board was very gracious to him when he attended the last school board meeting, but questioned whether they would actually do anything about the current situation.<sup>6</sup> In the same article, Richard F. McPherson, a local attorney and chairman of the Staunton Community Commission, reported to city council on the matter of access to public accommodations. A survey, which had been conducted by the joint study committee of the Chamber of Commerce-Retail Merchants Association, reported that out of the seventeen Staunton businesses serving food, only one stated, "it did not and would not serve Negroes."<sup>7</sup> The report also learned that the other businesses would integrate their establishments if their competitors did the same. The business owners of Staunton had quietly accepted the integration of public accommodations, choosing to serve blacks rather than resist. Local business leaders did not want social turmoil to disrupt the economy of Staunton.

Perhaps the black communities in Staunton were inspired by following

the examples of Martin Luther King, Jr., but dramatic sit-in demonstrations did not occur. The national sit-in movement began in the F.W. Woolworth store in downtown Greensboro, North Carolina, in February of 1960. Four black college students from North Carolina Agriculture and Technical College decided to walk into the Woolworth store to get served at the white lunch counter. They did not receive service but no violent incidents occurred. After this, the students returned each day with more students. The number of protesters increased. This incident sparked sit-ins, pickets, marches, and peaceful demonstrations by black students across the South.<sup>8</sup> The pattern of protests by the black communities and white civil rights activists led to changes in the social and economic status of blacks throughout the South. But no sit-ins or protests occurred in Staunton.

F.W. Woolworth had a lunch counter located in Staunton and, according to Dr. Patricia Menk former Mayor of Staunton, there were no incidents, passive or aggressive, at the Woolworth lunch counter or the public library. Menk noted that quietly Woolworth's announced one day that it would now serve black citizens. This announcement was due to the phone call placed by Reverend Mr. Scott to the home office of the F.W. Woolworth Company. The Staunton Public Library, also without media attention, announced to the students at the public schools that blacks were now allowed to come to the public library. There were no riots, and black citizens did not stage any sit-ins in order to obtain these rights. Racial tensions did not flare, and integration in public places occurred peacefully.

Within the educational system, the Brown v. Board of Education decision had shocked the nation and sparked changes in the racial status quo. When the Supreme Court handed down the landmark decision, Virginia politicians, led by Senator Harry Byrd, began to promote a massive resistance campaign to stop the integration of public schools. The massive resistance campaign sought to stop the integration of the public schools by denying state funds to any school that integrated and by providing funds to parents who would send their children to private, and presumably exclusively white, schools. In the Tuesday morning, May 18, 1954, issue of the Staunton News-Leader, the Brown decision made the front page. In the article "'Separate But Equal Theory' Discarded By Segregation Decision," the newspaper outlined the court's decision and explained the issue of states' rights. "Sen. Byrd (D-Va) said the decision is 'not only sweeping but it will bring implications and dangers of the greatest consequence.'"<sup>9</sup> Another headline read "Reaction In South To Supreme Court Varies; Quiet To Bitter." This article focused on national reaction to the Brown decision and outlined the different views that ranged from outrage to reserved acceptance. In the same

article, Governor Herman Talmadge from Atlanta, Georgia, stated that the decision by the courts had reduced the United States Constitution to just another scrap of paper. On the same front page, there was also another article under the headline "[Governor Thomas B.] Stanley Advises Going Slowly, Byrd Sees Crisis In Decision." The issue was certainly gaining attention from the southern states as some political leaders undertook an effort to maintain segregation of the schools.

The Staunton newspaper published little information about the reaction of Staunton's Christian churches to the movement for integration. In the days that followed the Brown decision, the Staunton paper printed comments by Christian citizens of Staunton concerning theater owners' decision to begin showing movies on Sunday rather than carrying articles about the crusade for civil rights in their midst. But also not found in the paper following the Brown decision were outcries from citizens, white or black, about the possible integration of Staunton City Public Schools. Yet, in an article printed in the May 18, 1954, issue of the Staunton News-Leader, superintendent for the Augusta County Public Schools Hugh K. Cassell responded to the Brown decision by stating, "we are still conducting our schools under the Constitution of Virginia, and I can make no statement until the attitude of our leaders in Richmond has been expressed."<sup>10</sup> Concerning the school issue, Staunton and its surrounding areas were following the lead of the state legislators and sitting tight until they were forced to make a move. The direction of desegregation was now in the hands of Virginia politicians.

During the weeks that followed the Brown decision, other cities close to Staunton, such as Charlottesville, began to feel the impact of the Byrd organization's massive resistance plan. On September 4, 1958, Governor James Lindsay Almond, Jr. who was at that time a loyal follower of Senator Byrd, warned city officials not to admit black students to the white schools or he would close them.<sup>11</sup> With that order in place, Charlottesville schools denied the applications of several black students. This action was the first of many incidents that plagued Charlottesville in the following months.

Senator Byrd responded to the Brown decision by emphasizing that the decision was "the most serious blow that has yet been struck against the rights of the states in a matter vitally affecting their authority and welfare."<sup>12</sup> The Byrd organization began to devise legislation to stop the integration of schools. Racism stirred a resistance to even token integration. With a firm stand, Governor Almond stated, "to compromise means to integrate."<sup>13</sup> According to Byrd's biographer, Ronald Heinemann, "The Court's school decision was perceived

as the first step in dismantling the entire Jim Crow system, including electoral control; it would have to be obstructed."<sup>14</sup> The Byrd organization believed that massive resistance was the only way to prevent the success of the African-American civil rights movement within the state. In Staunton, Governor Almond did not close Robert E. Lee High School or the other white schools in the vicinity during massive resistance. Somehow the plans of Harry Byrd were not put into effect in the Staunton school system, although Almond closed nine of Virginia's schools by the fall of 1958 (even though courts had ordered them integrated).<sup>15</sup> Mrs. Ernestine Dunnings, city schoolteacher, confirmed that Staunton did not face public school closings due to the racial bigotry of Governor Almond and Senator Byrd.

What is perplexing is that Staunton was not in danger of having the schools closed, nor was there massive resistance in Staunton, yet it took the city school board until 1964 to integrate the schools. A September 4, 1958 article titled "Integrated Schools in Several States in South Escaping Notice" discussed the southern schools that desegregated without incident. The article noted that elsewhere white and black children were coping with racially mixed schools without major incidents occurring. Charlotte and Greensboro, North Carolina, were in their second year of racially diverse classes and the police were on alert, but no incidents were expected. Cities in the South where scenes of violence occurred at one time were now coping with the integration issue, yet Staunton refused to integrate its schools, even though it had not seen instances of violence.

The situation in nearby Charlottesville stirred up a growing concern for the public education system as the need for public education for all children overruled some citizens' hostility toward integration. In light of the school closing decision, Charlottesville's citizens began to divide on the desegregation issue. Parents began to devise ways to keep their children in school. Committees were formed to deal with the issue, addressing the impending crisis of loss of public education for all children.<sup>16</sup> All over the state, parents dealt with the problem of public school closings to block integration. Should the racial status quo be maintained, or should Virginia educate its young people in functioning public schools? Would employers prefer a segregated school system or a labor force educated without regard to race? Ultimately, white parents in Charlottesville as well as across the state had to decide what was in their child's and the Commonwealth's best interest, public education or segregation.

While parents in Charlottesville struggled to find ways to educate their children after schools were closed, the NAACP stepped back, allowing the

white groups to lead the fight against massive resistance. Ministers, concerned mothers, business leaders, and civil rights activists supported the cause of public education, forcing Virginia and local politicians to address the needs of the children. As early as 1954, the issue of adequate support for the education of Staunton students who lived on the west side of town came before the Staunton School Board. This issue led the board to face the issue of school integration. On May 27, 1954, the school board unanimously adopted a resolution that read: "Resolved-That the matter of segregation in no way alters our previous conclusion that a grade school is needed in the western section of the city just as soon as it can properly be planned and constructed." This resolution by the Staunton School Board revealed that some Stauntonians believed the city was not in jeopardy of having its schools closed through the adoption of massive resistance.

However, Stauntonians continued to struggle with other problems indicative of separate but equal policies in education. According to residents of Staunton, the Booker T. Washington High School, the black high school in Staunton, did not have a cafeteria and the books given the children were second hand. According to Rita Wilson, resident of Staunton and a council member in 2002, blacks could not try on clothing or shoes in stores, could not eat at white restaurants, or even go to white doctors. Wilson noted in her series of articles printed in the Staunton News-Leader from January 7 to February 26, 1982, that this segregation created a strong black community with its own business.<sup>17</sup> Thus, Staunton over the years has been home to several black dentists and doctors, at least one black lawyer, a black-owned construction company, and an African-American funeral home. These professionals and businesses served the community's needs arising from the customary division among the races.<sup>18</sup>

The story of the Augusta County Training School demonstrated the inequality of public education in Staunton. Although no written record of this school exists in any school board documents, it served as a solution to educate black children. In the early 1930s, there were many injustices that African-American children suffered in Staunton. Passing white schools on the more than one-mile walk to school, black children were forced to make the journey on foot to the black school, enduring all types of weather. After the 1933 closing of Smokey Row School located off Middlebrook Road in a predominantly African-American community, the students had to walk three to four miles to the nearby Cedar Green School. Noah Brown, a concerned parent, approached the school board about the closure of the Smokey Row School and the lack of adequate transportation to Cedar Green. The school board told Brown, "they

could not supply such transportation but would supply part of the gasoline if Mr. Brown would supply the vehicle."<sup>19</sup> Brown had to press the school board hard to obtain the slightest gains. Brown sold his car to buy a truck which he then converted into a makeshift school bus. The Model-T truck helped to keep the black children in school by providing them with the transportation necessary to get to Cedar Green School.

After resolving the issue of transportation, Brown became more involved with the quality and quantity of education offered the children of the black communities. He presented a solution to the school board for the improvement of the educational opportunities for blacks. He posed the following question: "If the men of the community would dig out a foundation, would you [the school board] build us a school on it?"<sup>20</sup> Because African-American parents had to match funds equally at this time to acquire anything related to education, the school board accepted the offer. Through the determination of Noah Brown and the black citizens of the community, the Augusta County Training School (ACTS) became a reality in 1938. Black students were bussed from all over Augusta County to this school until it closed in 1966. Students attended the Augusta County Training School for the eighth and ninth grade and then transferred to Booker T. Washington High School to complete the higher grades and receive their high school diplomas. Brown's fight for educational equality illuminated the struggles by the black communities to educate their children and the unfair treatment they received within the local public school system. Fairness of education, especially for black children, was far from a reality during these hard times in 1938.

As demonstrated within the inequalities in ACTS, public education was separate but certainly not equal. An examination of the minutes of the Staunton City Council, reveals evidence of white control of the public schools. On May 28, 1953, H.B. Moyer, a black citizen concerned on behalf of Booker T. Washington High School, approached the Staunton City Council to request that a new light be installed on the school grounds for safety reasons. The city council minutes stated, "The Manager was instructed to arrange with the Superintendent of Schools, Mr. Shelburne, the placement of such a light."<sup>21</sup> Over a year later, during the July 22, 1954, city council meeting, Council was again approached on the matter of the same light. The minutes read, "Mr. Moyer again approached Council on the matter of lighting at the colored school on Johnson Street stating that the present light was not sufficient. Council instructed the City Manager and Mr. Shelburne to solve the situation and report back at the next regular meeting of council."<sup>22</sup> The needs of the black citizens were not being taken seriously at

this time. Within the Council minutes following the request, nothing was noted in regards to the completion of this request. It is not clear whether the light was ever placed on the school grounds; since there is no record of any action taken, apparently the request was discarded by Shelburne and Staunton, thus confirming the separate and unequal treatment of blacks.

The light incident might not seem significant enough to demonstrate racial discrimination. However, L.F. Shelburne, superintendent over all city public schools black and white, had previously approached city council on several matters concerning the white schools. The minutes recorded during the 1950s did not include one request from Shelburne regarding the black schools' needs. On behalf of the Staunton City School Board, Shelburne asked for funding for the following: February 27, 1950, \$30,000 for a new school site on Greenville Avenue in Staunton; August 14, 1952, \$1,054,405 for the enlargement of Robert E. Lee High School; March 27, 1952, \$529,901.77 for the construction of the new elementary school.<sup>23</sup> Following up with these requests, Shelburne and the Staunton School Board were adamant about building and enlarging the white schools, leaving the black schools to fend for themselves. Included in the morning May 19, 1954, issue of the Staunton News-Leader is an article containing a request from the Staunton School Board relating to the construction of the West End school. The article titled, "Staunton School Board Asks For West End Action," notes that the "census figures show only 60 Negroes between the ages of one and 20 living in the Western section."<sup>24</sup> The school board provided census information to bolster the case against a school for blacks. Since the black population of Staunton, Waynesboro, and Augusta County was small in comparison to that of the region east of the Blue Ridge, the school board could argue that blacks were too few in number to justify a new school building for African-Americans. Consequently, as yet, white leaders refused to respond to black pressure. The school board wanted to build a school for white students even though a large number of black students were in desperate need of better accommodations. But an article in the Staunton News-Leader dated January 17, 1964, ten years after the original call for action to build a school, noted that: "Floyd E. Henry asked why the School Board has adopted a 'build a new school for the whites and add two rooms to Booker T. attitude.'"<sup>25</sup> The black citizens were now taking charge of the school situation and forcing city council to notice the inequalities of white and black schools. Slowly the racial barriers were coming down.

In his article "Black Education in Staunton," Arthur R. Ware, Jr., examined the evolution of black education in Staunton, leading in 1966 to the closing

of Booker T. Washington High School. Ware remembered that, while progress was made in the quality of the area's black education in the fifties and sixties, the gap, nonetheless, widened between opportunities offered at Lee High School and those at Booker T. Washington. The primary hinderance was that enrollment at the black high school never exceeded two hundred. According to Ware, George E. White, principal of Booker T. Washington high school since 1926, urged the Staunton School Board to approve providing a full four years of education at the school. The board approved the request, but only with the condition that the "Negro patrons would have to purchase whatever equipment and supplies that would be required for a science laboratory."<sup>26</sup> By adding this provision, the school board clearly revealed its reluctance to do much for black education. African-Americans in Staunton did not have the economic resources to subsidize the scientific laboratory at Booker T. Washington.

In an effort to raise the standards of education for black children to those of white children, black citizens of Augusta County, Staunton, and Waynesboro drafted a proposal about 1953 to erect a regional high school that would combine black students in Staunton, Waynesboro, and Augusta County. This would boost enrollment to levels necessary to obtain the same educational opportunities as white children. However, low enrollment was only one of the problems faced by black schools. The quality of education offered was inadequate because of the discriminatory views of Staunton politicians and members of the city school board. After the Brown decision, the proposal to combine was dropped and the three jurisdictions continued to go their own way; blacks of each school district would single-handedly have to fight for better facilities and equal educational opportunities for their children. In 1959, Staunton added four rooms to the Booker T. Washington High School and then another four in 1963.<sup>27</sup> This action was perhaps city council's attempt to placate the black school administrators so that they would not push the issue of integration or protest the inadequacy of the black high schools.

In 1964, Reverend James O. Powell of Mt. Zion Baptist Church visited the school board meeting, speaking as a representative of the Staunton Chapter of the NAACP and as a private citizen. He presented to the board facts concerning the inequalities in the athletic program and curriculum offered black students at the Booker T. Washington High School. His visit to the school board and his comments were printed in the local paper. Powell's statements were followed by a request for the board to consider a plan calling for complete desegregation of the city's schools. Chairman of the Board Thomas W. Dixon was recorded in the paper as stating, "the board would give his [Mr. Powell's] suggestion every

consideration.”<sup>28</sup> Three days after this article appeared, an article titled “School Board Issue Discussed” was printed. The NAACP was now fighting hard within the governing bodies of Staunton to address the unfairness and lackadaisical behavior of city officials regarding integration.

Thelma Newman, resident of Staunton and vice-president of the local branch of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) in 2002, believed the black students in Staunton lost a lot from the integration of the schools. According to Ms. Newman, “integration may not have been the best for black youth,” because within the black schools, children found caring teachers that took an interest in their students.<sup>29</sup> These black teachers served as good role models for young blacks, as they worked to develop more one-on-one relationships with their students. A.R. Ware, Jr., also noted that black education “was always blessed by having strong and dedicated teachers.”<sup>30</sup> He boasted that teachers within the black schools worked as a team assisting each other for the benefit of the children. The dedication of the black teachers was enormous; the instructors often stayed long hours after school to assist a child if necessary. Black educators went out of their way for their students and always kept in close contact with the parents, informing them of any problems. It was a group effort to ensure the success of black youth.<sup>31</sup>

For many years that additional dedication went unrewarded. Lower black teachers’ salaries is further evidence of discrimination in Staunton during the forties. Traditionally, black public school teachers were paid less than white teachers. A statewide initiative of the black Virginia Teachers Association was launched to address the issue. In 1941, appearing before the Staunton School Board for the second time, the Staunton Teachers Association petitioned for a salary increase. With the backing of the parent teachers association, the school board granted the black teachers a ten-dollar-a-month increase. Several years later, the Staunton Teachers Association reappeared before the Board on August 7, 1949, to request equal pay among black and white teachers. The Board informed the teachers that since 1942 they had been trying to equalize salaries and in a few years, they hoped to complete the process. It was not until the 1950s that teachers’ salaries were equalized.<sup>32</sup>

What happened to these teachers once the black schools closed in 1967? According to Mrs. Dunnings, retired Staunton City school teacher, the school board placed the black teachers in the formerly white schools when the schools became integrated. The black teachers were fully qualified and able to teach in integrated schools, even though their employment had been limited to black schools before integration. Hired by Ware, the principal of the Booker T.

Washington School, Mrs. Dunnings taught for thirty-three years in the Staunton school system. When the schools were integrated, she did not lose her job nor was she offered a choice among schools. The school board, as she stated, “just placed you in a school where ever they wanted to put you.” Mrs. Dunnings did not feel threatened by white teachers or students. She remembers fondly the new materials and books her [black] students received after integration. She also remembers the hardships black students faced during segregation when they had to use worn-out books that had been through several white students before they reached the black children. Her students would often comment about the condition of the books. Mrs. Dunnings would reply, “the condition of the book is not what is going to take you somewhere, it is the use of the material inside the book that will help you gain knowledge and what you do with that knowledge is what is important.”<sup>33</sup> Her dedication to the education of her students was enormous, and after integration, Mrs. Dunnings’s commitment remained the same. Once integration occurred, Mrs. Dunnings visited the parents of both white and black students to inquire about their academic progress and to help in providing assistance where it was needed.

The Staunton School Board also faced a racial discrimination issue when Reverend James O. Powell again addressed council “concerning the appointment of a Negro to the city school board.”<sup>34</sup> It was recommended by council and agreeable to Powell that the matter be discussed on January 16, 1964, at a joint meeting of city council and the Staunton Community Commission. There are no extant minutes of the Staunton City Council on that date, but a lengthy article in the Staunton News-Leader the following morning addressed the appointment of a Negro to the Staunton City School Board and the quality of education offered black students. Appearing under the headline “School Board Issue Discussed,” the article outlined the debate over an appointment of a black member to the board. In the 1960s, Virginia school boards were appointed. According to state law, three members from each school district within a city were to serve on the school board. The selection of boundaries and the people who serve was left up to the city governing bodies, always placing the school board under the control of city council. The Staunton News-Leader informed readers that Powell requested “that Council seriously consider appointing a Negro to the board when a vacancy occurred; or in creating another chair on the board and appointing a Negro to fill it.”<sup>35</sup> Mayor E. Lewis Knowles addressed the meeting first by reading a prepared statement. His statement stressed that the commission’s request to appoint a Negro had been considered, but the council was unable to find such a person residing in the district from which



the appointment had to be made, with the necessary qualifications to satisfy council. He also stated that he was convinced that the school board did not, nor had ever, shown partiality in the administering of the public schools. The Staunton News-Leader printed Powell's comments regarding his curiosity over the possibility of council appointing a Negro school board member in the near future. "We are not becoming impatient, but somewhat frustrated," he said.<sup>36</sup> The article also addressed frustrations voiced by citizens regarding the quality of the education offered black children. Bernice Newman, graduate of Booker T. Washington High School, voiced her concerns to council. In order for Miss Newman to meet full college entrance requirements, she had to do special work.<sup>37</sup> Miss Newman's personal revelations about the curriculum being offered black children revealed the disadvantage for blacks within a segregated educational system. By placing a black citizen on the school board, the needs of the black schools would be represented, and black children would not have to catch up to fulfill the college entrance requirements.

Through the Staunton School Board and the city council, black citizens of Staunton began to break the racial restrictions that had so long prevailed. The disappointment voiced by blacks and some whites over the inability to get a black appointed to the school board radiated throughout Staunton. The Staunton News-Leader article printed a statement made by Councilwoman Patricia Menk, Professor of History at Mary Baldwin College, which highlighted her views on the subject. Dr. Menk stated she was a "minority of one, or one and a half, or possibly two"<sup>38</sup> that believed that now was the time to appoint a Negro to the school board. Dr. Menk, the driving force behind the motion in council that created the Staunton Community Commission, also proposed changing the school district lines. She stated that she was in favor of selecting a qualified Negro to serve on the school board and that she "would look with great favor on a Negro on city Council."<sup>39</sup> Although not all of her constituents shared the progressive views of Dr. Menk, her remarks signalled that change within the city's public systems was beginning.

A key turning point in the struggle for civil rights followed soon after the discussion of African-American membership on the school board and city council. On July 2, 1964, the Congress of the United States passed the Civil Rights Act of 1964, the most sweeping federal civil rights law in American history. It banned racial and gender segregation in employment, public accommodation, and public education. Based on the schedule adopted for the integration of Robert E. Lee High School in 1964, rapid integration was not on the priority list for the Staunton Public School system. But the federal law helped bring

racial segregation of the public schools to an end. In 1964, ten years after the Brown decision, the NAACP brought a lawsuit against the Staunton School Board demanding integrated schools. Before the case went to court, Staunton schools were integrated. Open massive resistance bypassed Staunton entirely. When racial barriers fell, Staunton experienced peaceful integration of schools throughout the city. Citizen concerns about the possibility of racial fights within the schools were unwarranted and no major incidents were recorded in the local newspaper when integration finally occurred. Leroy Smith, who attended Robert E. Lee High School shortly after Staunton integrated its schools in 1967, described the process as peaceful. He believed that integration went smoothly because blacks and whites accepted the inevitability of integration. Having attended both county and city schools, he believed that he experienced more racial tension within the Augusta County schools than in the city schools. Augusta County schools, which had a smaller African-American population than the cities of Staunton and Waynesboro, experienced several race-related fights and a greater degree of racial tension. Smith noted that R. E. Lee did have its share of racial tension, but the majority of students got along fine. He also noted that blacks enrolled in the high school were accepted because they helped the athletic program: "they [black men] were better at sports."<sup>40</sup>

The most heavily publicized aspect of racial integration concerned the schools, but a less visible element of the campaign for racial justice concerned equal access to public accommodations. In this area there was also resistance to breaking down racial barriers. A request brought before the city council in May 1954, by the NAACP was found in the minutes of Staunton City Council. The NAACP petitioned council for the use of the Augusta County Training School Auditorium for a dance. The request was denied on the grounds that the function was not school-related.<sup>41</sup> Since the NAACP was at the forefront of the drive for civil rights, this request may have sparked opposition. Race related or not, the public requests from blacks during the 1950s and early 1960s, were rare, and when addressed, they were politely, not openly and loudly, ignored. The resistance to the assertion of civil rights to public accommodations was also seen in an incident that occurred in Brooks Restaurant. In the early 1960s Flora (Kiser) Brooks, white owner of the restaurant located outside of Staunton, allowed a black man to eat in her restaurant. Described by her daughter as having the "courage to stand up for what she thought was right-against all odds," Mrs. Brooks made the gentleman feel welcome. Soon after he was seated in the restaurant, white patrons began to leave and eventually the sheriff arrived at the restaurant. Mrs. Brooks was fined \$450 dollars for serving a black man.<sup>42</sup> Such

a fine could be a serious injury to any small business person who sympathized with African-American efforts.

In an article published in the Staunton News-Leader on January 17, 1964, an incident was reported concerning the Staunton YMCA and Boy Scout troop leaders, John Davenport and Theodore Harden. The black Boy Scout troop requested use of the YMCA pool for several members of the troop that needed to complete life saving in order to qualify for the Eagle Scout Award. The scoutmaster was told by the YMCA executive secretary, Edward M. Dowling, that they needed to present their case before the proper committee of the organization at its next meeting. Davenport contacted Dowling on January 14, at which time he was notified that the committee had met on January 8 and had turned down the request. Davenport questioned why Dowling had not contacted him. Dowling replied "he had been too busy 'making out reports' to call Davenport and besides knew he (Davenport) would contact him."<sup>43</sup> This incident, as well as the Brooks Restaurant incident, demonstrated the undercurrent of racial discrimination in Staunton and Augusta County and that resistance to integration continued in Staunton in the 1960s.

Another act of courage by a white citizen was demonstrated by Walter Carroll Brooke, rector of Trinity Episcopal Church in Staunton. Brooke had been an advocate of the integration of schools, public places, and churches. Unfortunately, his position on the civil rights of African-Americans was not shared by all members of his parish. Brooke's stand produced spirited debate and division among Trinity's members. An issue dealing with the diocesan camp and conference center located at Hemlock Haven near Marion, Virginia, arose. The camp was integrated, and so Trinity's vestry forbade its youth to attend the camp. The youth of the parish, led by Brooke, asked for permission to attend the camp and ultimately received it. His leadership among the young people of the church demonstrated that the courage and action of some white citizens in the Staunton community also helped dissolve racial barriers.<sup>44</sup>

In *The Origins of the Civil Rights Movement*, Aldon Morris notes that the basis of social movements rests on the conscious and deliberate efforts of people to change their society. He placed emphasis on the organization and planning of the movement, noting that these elements were central to all local and national movements concerning civil rights. Morris believed that "movement centers, strategic planning, organizing, charisma, and preexisting institutions were central to the civil rights movement in that they enabled the black community effectively to confront an entrenched opposition dedicated to keeping them subservient."<sup>45</sup> These institutions were vital to the fight for equal-

ity in an unequal society. Blacks rallied together because they could identify with the missions and visions of the movement leaders. The charisma of the leaders was important to gain the confidence of the masses. Once the people rallied to the cause, the organization and structure of the movement had to be maintained for it to endure over time. According to Morris, Martin Luther King, Jr., had a charismatic personality that was necessary to rally his people to fight for the civil rights guaranteed by law. King envisioned a community free of racism where blacks and whites lived as brothers. He was able to rally his supporters because he possessed the ability to organize and mobilize the black community. In addition, he was able to utilize the valuable resources he obtained, making his movement stronger.<sup>46</sup> Because King possessed a vision of nonviolent religious unity and the ability to move people, he was able to reach black as well as white citizens who were tired of racial tensions. But Staunton, Virginia, had no single figure like Dr. King to head the movement. It did have citizens, both black and white, who were not necessarily charismatic like Dr. King, but who spoke out for the cause. One of the prime groups of leaders from Staunton's African-American community was the clergy of black churches in the town.<sup>47</sup>

In the Virginia movement, many ministers who also served as NAACP leaders formed the Virginia State Unity of the Southern Christian Leadership Conference (SCLC), a prime leader in the national civil rights movement with which Dr. King was associated. A state structure of the SCLC formed in the 1960s while organizing a march on Richmond in protest of the closing of the public schools. The Reverend Wyatt Walker, executive Director of the SCLC, believed that Virginia was in a place to give direction to the South. Walker stated that the ministers and leaders of the black communities had an obligation to promote the participation of black citizens in the civil rights movement. He knew that the greater the number of people involved, the stronger the movement would be in the struggle for equal rights.<sup>48</sup>

Staunton's black ministers led the cause for equal rights. The Reverend James Oliver Powell became pastor of the Mt. Zion Baptist Church in Staunton in 1957. Joe Nutt, in his book, *African-American Churches (Past & Present)* of Augusta County, Staunton, Waynesboro, & Vicinity, described Powell as a minister of many talents. Among those talents were his organizational skills and the ability to preach the gospel. As Morris stresses in his book, the organization of the movement was extremely important. The Reverend Mr. Powell possessed the ability to rally his people. His stand on equal and fair treatment for blacks helped him to become the local icon in the fight for equal rights in the Staunton

community. Heading community organizations, serving as president of the Crusade for Voters, serving as vice president of the Interracial Augusta County Ministerial Alliance, and leading the Staunton Branch of the NAACP as president were among his many contributions to black citizens of Staunton.<sup>49</sup>

Another leading figure in the fight for civil rights in Staunton was the Reverend James Henry Scott. Serving his community as president of the Staunton branch of the NAACP and as chair of Region 7 of the Virginia State Conference of the NAACP, Scott spearheaded the civil rights and social discrimination campaigns in Staunton. He was especially active in promoting equal employment, which had been mandated by the Civil Rights Act of 1964. During the 1960s, the membership of the local chapter of the NAACP was at five hundred. This membership was the largest number recorded for a city the size of Staunton. Through the efforts of Scott, the industries located in Staunton and the surrounding areas were pushed to hire black workers. At one time, the Reverend Mr. Scott was in contact with more than thirty businesses, discussing the issue of equal opportunities in the workforce. His hard work led to the integration of Genesco and DuPont, both in Waynesboro, and other industries in the area. Before the efforts of the area's ministers, there was only one black worker employed at Waynesboro's Genesco and he was the janitor. Scott pushed Genesco to hire more black workers in other positions. He also engaged in a battle with Staunton's leading trucking firm, pushing it to hire black drivers. The white drivers of the trucking company requested a meeting with him to disclose information concerning the discriminatory hiring practices of the company. Rather than hire black drivers, according to the truck drivers, the company worked the white drivers excessively. Yet the company stated to Scott and the community that they did not need to hire additional help. The white drivers were willing to testify that they were extremely overworked and the company needed to hire more drivers. The government was brought in on this case, and a Civil Rights Division of the Justice Department lawyer sat in on the company meetings. The lawyer reported to the Reverend Mr. Scott after each meeting, noting that the company would hire black drivers, but if they hired them, it did not mean they had to keep them. Basically the company was going to put an enormous amount of pressure on the blacks it hired so they would eventually quit. Although industries were now forced to hire black workers, the managers of the company still set the conditions under which black employees had to work. Such gains made in the equal opportunity employment of blacks in the Staunton community can be contributed to the efforts of Reverend Mr. Scott.

Three weeks after the assassination of Martin Luther King Jr., in April 1968,

Scott and other citizens led a march down Johnson Street in Staunton. The people of Staunton rallied to Scott's side as he gave the opening speech before the march. The blow of King's death was felt throughout the country, especially by those closely associated with the civil rights movement. Blacks everywhere were outraged and riots broke out in more than 100 cities.<sup>50</sup> The civil rights march in Staunton signified to the community that the black citizens were standing up for the equal rights they had been denied for far too long. Black residents of Staunton were determined to see that the civil rights guaranteed by law were not going to be overlooked by the city government anymore.

The Civil Rights Movement in Staunton went through several phases during the 1950s and 1960s. Unlike Charlottesville, Staunton escaped the civic embarrassment led by Governor Almond and Senator Byrd in their massive resistance campaign. The historical facts concerning civil rights activity in Staunton show no aggressive movement by black citizens until the early 1960s. At this time, ministers began to address several discriminating practices of the city council. As black citizens of Staunton began to demand equal rights, the color barriers came to the center of the attention. The Civil Rights Act of 1964 provided the leverage needed by local groups to end segregation. The closing of Booker T. Washington and other black schools in 1966 led to better educational opportunities for black youth and better facilities and supplies for the black teachers. The determination of Powell, Scott, and other members of the black community forced the integration issue, demanding that city council meet the needs of its black citizens. They demanded equal rights in housing, food establishments, and employment. All citizens experienced the social and economic changes evolving from the civil rights movement in Staunton. The movement within the city was nonviolent and successful. Though riots, massive protests, massive resistance, and other violent acts did not happen within Staunton, black residents fought for justice. Crossing the racial boundaries that had been formulated by law and tradition, the civil rights movement in Staunton paved the way for changes in the opportunities offered blacks in the local community.

### Endnotes

I would like to express my thanks to everyone who provided information for this paper.

<sup>1</sup> "Civil Rights in the United States," The Columbia Electronic Encyclopedia, Sixth Edition. 2000, Columbia University Press. <http://www.encyclopedia.com>.

<sup>2</sup> Patricia H. Menk, "Staunton: Only Yesterday," *Augusta Historical Bulletin*, 32 (1996), 26.

<sup>3</sup> KKK history page, <http://www.altered.com/dengue/kkk/main.htm>.

<sup>4</sup> Thelma Newman, Highlights in the History of the Staunton NAACP, personal notes written by Mrs. Newman, current vice-president of the Staunton Chapter NAACP.

<sup>5</sup> All the members of the Staunton Police Department in the 1950s were white. Menk, 26.

<sup>6</sup> Staunton News-Leader, 17 January 1964. The Staunton Community Commission was formed to address the unequal treatment of blacks during the 1960s in Staunton. Unfortunately, I was unable to find out more about this commission. More investigation to assess the role of this organization needs to be done.

<sup>7</sup> Ibid.

<sup>8</sup> Martin Oppenheimer, *The Sit-In Movement of 1960*, (New York: Carlson Publishing Inc.), 38.

<sup>9</sup> "Separate But Equal' Theory Discarded By Segregation Decision," *Staunton News-Leader*, 18 May 1954.

<sup>10</sup> *Staunton News-Leader*, 18 May 1954, 1.

<sup>11</sup> Matthew D. Lassiter and Andrew B. Lewis, *Moderates' Dilemma: Massive Resistance to School Desegregation in Virginia* (Charlottesville, Va.: University Press of Virginia, 1998), 84.

<sup>12</sup> Ronald L. Heinemann, *Harry Byrd of Virginia* (Charlottesville, Va.: University Press of Virginia, 1996), 330.

<sup>13</sup> Lassiter and Lewis, 45.

<sup>14</sup> Heinemann, 330.

<sup>15</sup> In January of 1959, Almond broke with Byrd and reopened the nine schools. On the reaction to "massive resistance" in Augusta County, see Richard K. McMaster, *Augusta County History, 1865-1950* (Staunton, Va.: Augusta County Historical Society, 1987), 213-214.

<sup>16</sup> Lassiter and Lewis, 45.

<sup>17</sup> Rita Wilson, *Staunton-Augusta County Black Historical Association*, "The Black Community of Staunton, Virginia in the Era of Segregation," Staunton Public Library.

<sup>18</sup> Menk, 26.

<sup>19</sup> Joe Nutt, *Historical Sketches of African-American Churches (Past & Present) of Augusta County, Staunton, Waynesboro, & Vicinity: Including Cemetery Burial Records and Biographies* (Published by the author with a grant from the Virginia Foundation for the Humanities and Public Policy, Charlottesville, Va.: 2001), 346-347. Records do not indicate whether the county provided school bus transportation for white students.

<sup>20</sup> Nutt, 346-347.

<sup>21</sup> Record of Minutes of Staunton City Council, 28 May 1953, City Hall, Staunton, Va.

<sup>22</sup> Ibid., 22 July 1954, City Hall, Staunton, Va.

<sup>23</sup> Ibid., 27 February 1950; 14 August 1952; 27 March 1952, City Hall, Staunton, Va.

<sup>24</sup> "Staunton School Board Asks For West End Action," *Staunton News-Leader*, 19 May 1954.

<sup>25</sup> "School Board Issue Discussed," *Staunton News-Leader*, Jan 17, 1964, 2.

<sup>26</sup> A.R. Ware, Jr., "Black Education in Staunton," *Augusta Historical Bulletin*, Volume 17 number 2 (Fall 1981), 11-12.

<sup>27</sup> Ware, 11.

<sup>28</sup> "School Board Votes Pay Increase For Administrators," *Staunton News-Leader*, 14 January 1964.

<sup>29</sup> Thelma Newman. Interviewed by Josie Dull, 8 April 2002, Staunton, Va.

<sup>30</sup> Ware, 14.

<sup>31</sup> Ibid.

<sup>32</sup> Ibid, 13.

<sup>33</sup> Ernestine Dunnings. Interviewed by Josie Dull, 25 June 2002, Staunton, Va.

<sup>34</sup> Record of Minutes of Staunton City Council, 9 January 1964, City Hall, Staunton, Va.

<sup>35</sup> *Staunton News-Leader*, 17 January 1964, 1.

<sup>36</sup> Ibid., 17 January 1964, 2.

<sup>37</sup> Ibid.

<sup>38</sup> Ibid.

<sup>39</sup> Ibid.

<sup>40</sup> Leroy Smith. Interviewed by Josie Dull, 28 June 2002, Staunton, Va.

<sup>41</sup> Record of Minutes of Staunton City Council, May, 1954, City Hall, Staunton, Va.

<sup>42</sup> "Tribute to my Mother," *Staunton News-Leader*, 12 May 2002, Staunton, Va.

<sup>43</sup> *Staunton New-Leader*, 17 January 1964, 2.

<sup>44</sup> Nancy Sorrells, Katharine Brown, and Susanne Simmons, "Conformable to the Doctrine and Discipline:" The history of Trinity Church Augusta Parish, Staunton, Virginia 1746-1996, (Staunton, Va.: Lot's Wife Publishing, 1996).

<sup>45</sup> Morris, 278-281.

<sup>46</sup> Ibid.

<sup>47</sup> There were five African-American churches in Staunton in the 1950s. Menk, 27.

<sup>48</sup> Morris, 184.

<sup>49</sup> Nutt, 129.

<sup>50</sup> Levine, Michael, *African-Americans and Civil Rights from 1619 to the Present*, (Arizona: Oryx Press, 1996), 206.

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# Waynesboro's Port Republic Road Historic District

By Vera Haley

Following the Civil War, some former slaves went north looking for better prospects and less discrimination, but many remained in the Waynesboro area, found jobs, and raised their families. The Port Republic Road area of Waynesboro, which was recently designated as a historic district, became a magnet for antebellum free blacks as well as former slaves after the war. The sector began as an early nineteenth-century subdivision near mill owner Frederick Imboden's business complex. The neighborhood's proximity to industry and the railroad depots made it attractive to laborers. By the early 1870s houses and churches were under construction.<sup>1</sup>

Lots and streets took form earlier in the century. In the 1810s Imboden had over twenty lots of roughly quarter-acre size laid out near the road leading to the northern outskirts of Waynesboro and the town of Port Republic, located fifteen miles to the north (thus the name Port Republic Road). The hillside plots overlooked Imboden's businesses and industry beside the South River. By 1815 there was a merchant mill and dam, carding machine, and distillery. Although early plans for the development have remained elusive, a portion of a plat was discovered attached to an 1877 deed.<sup>2</sup>

It is likely that Imboden formed the community to attract personnel to work in his businesses. Pennsylvania native John Crouse, was among the first residents who purchased land near the river in 1817. Crouse was a blacksmith, farmer, and land speculator. Waynesboro historians Tom Elliott and Alice Wood have commented on the significance of the timing of this sale to Crouse, which occurred on the same day that Imboden recorded the sale of a slave blacksmith named Waxey. Elliott and Wood speculate that "John Crouse replaced Waxey at Waxey's forge and anvil that day." Crouse's home still stands at 368 Riverside Drive.<sup>3</sup>

The thirty-five-acre district is locally significant because it stands as the main, historic predominantly African-American district in the city from about 1870 until the early 1950s, spanning eighty years.<sup>4</sup> An 1884 map shows devel-



opment on both sides of Port Republic Road. A brick factory, hardware factory, paper factory, and other industries were located just across the river.<sup>5</sup> Typical occupations of area blacks during the 1870s and 1880s included domestic servant, laborer, and railroad worker. The train station, located at the bottom of the Port Republic Road hill, had a passenger depot, freight depot, express office, cattle scales, and a water tank and pump station for steam locomotives.<sup>6</sup>

According to a 1923 tabulation, numerous area residents worked in white-owned businesses and homes as waiters, cooks, janitors, maids, servants, and gardeners. Other occupations included educator, minister, bootlegger, nurse, machinist, fireman, and engineer. When the DuPont manufacturing facility opened in 1929, more employment opportunities became available.<sup>7</sup>

Port Republic Road, the main transportation artery of the locale, stretches the full length of the district. The historic area includes the streets of Alpha, Beta, Elkton, Fontaine, and Smith as well as Fairview Avenue, Minden Place, Riverside Drive, and Shiloh Avenue. In the early to mid-1900s, the tract was a self-contained community. Residents were born, baptized, educated, employed, married, and buried within the confines of a small geographical area.

The vicinity looked different when it was the focal point of the black community. The simple weather board residences were meticulously maintained. Yards contained vegetable gardens, chicken pens, and small livestock, indicating effort by families to be self-sustaining. It was a place for families – a district that took care of its own, especially the children. Youngsters roamed the neighborhood, watched the activity at the railroad station, and played baseball. Residents of nearby Florence Avenue heard singing on summer evenings. Weekends were spent socializing and worshipping at one of the nearby churches.

Farmland once edged the district. Behind what is now the Waynesboro Department of Parks and Recreation headquarters at Rosenwald Community Center was Bush's farm, which included much of the acreage along present-day Florence Avenue. An orchard was located behind what is now the Pleasant View United Methodist Church. These operations provided jobs planting and harvesting crops, milking cows, caring for chickens, and performing maintenance.<sup>8</sup>

The Griston Store stood on the north end of Port Republic Road, at the corner of Dogwood Street. There were two log cabins across the street, which were demolished to make room for the two unique rock houses that stand there today.

Abraham Hall, built by a Mr. Hobson who purchased land in 1919, was a lodge meeting place as well as a community center. A restaurant was located on the first floor, with dances and basketball games held on the upper level.<sup>9</sup> The

Elks Lodge, built in 1917, was also a mixed-use structure. The Improved Benevolent and Protective Order of Elks of the World was founded in 1898 as a black organization patterned after the white BPOE.<sup>10</sup> The building also contained a barbershop, beauty parlor, and restaurant. The Tarry Hotel, completed in 1940, was situated close to the railroad tracks and served as a weekend getaway for black servicemen during World War II. In 1951, under the management of William B. Woodson, the hotel advertised "Good Food & Clean Rooms."<sup>11</sup>

A schoolhouse for black children had been constructed by 1871. In 1874 a Staunton newspaper reported that "A visit to the Waynesboro public colored school would repay the visitor. In arithmetic, geography, grammar and penmanship few schools in the land would make a better show." The article speculated that the school would turn out many teachers. Another report the same year praised a theatrical production at the school.<sup>12</sup> In spite of the good reviews, the quality of educational opportunities was a concern in the community. This prompted many families with relatives in New York City to send their children north for an education. The late Lillie Mae Johnson, along with many others from Waynesboro, lived in Harlem and attended high school there, returning to Virginia for holidays and summer vacations.<sup>13</sup>

The four-room Rosenwald School, built in 1924, was a dream-come-true. It was constructed with seed money from the fund established by Julius Rosenwald, the Sears, Roebuck and Company executive and Chicago philanthropist who financially supported black education throughout the South. The Waynesboro school was one of 4,977 schools in fifteen states that were built using the fund. Several stipulations were met to receive funding. The structure was designed to Rosenwald's specifications. The school was owned and maintained by the public school authorities and the families of the students contributed money, labor, or materials.<sup>14</sup> The local school first accommodated only children from the first through the seventh grade, but was later expanded to include high school grades. More than just a school, Rosenwald became a focal point of community life. The original building and a 1934 addition were replaced by the present building in 1959, but a 1938-1939 auditorium/gymnasium and a 1951 addition were retained.

Driving through the Port Republic Road area of today, it is hard to imagine the number of businesses that once existed there. Sherman's Barbershop was a gathering place for exchanging news and playing checkers in addition to getting a cut and shave; Annie Spears operated a restaurant specializing in good home cooking; Dr. Hilton tended the sick from his home office; Jim Brown operated a shoe repair business; Joe Harris was the manager for all black baseball players

in the city and owned a small shop; Dr. Chavis's medical office featured the first indoor bathroom in the neighborhood; Leach's Meat Market was easily identified by the large chopping block on the front porch; Midwife Beatrice Sullivan delivered almost 400 babies in her lifetime; the Redd family produced an array of musicians and performed as the Red Dots.

Fairview Cemetery, an important landmark, was established on land deeded by Joshua and Nancy Hill in 1885 as a "colored cemetery for the burial of colored persons." The cemetery was enlarged in the late 1920s and again in the second half of the twentieth century. Many graves were marked with plain wooden headboards, but few of the old markers remain.<sup>15</sup>

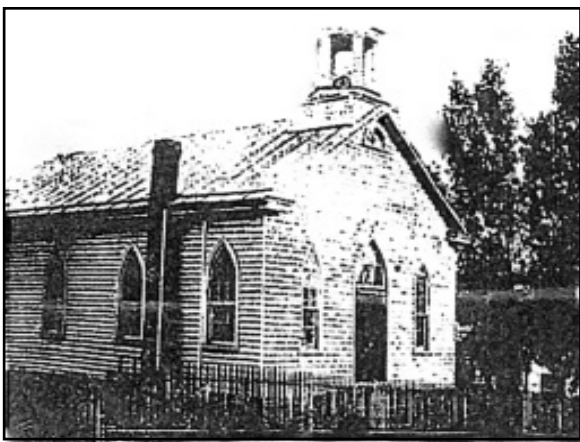
Construction of churches began in the early 1870s. These religious and social centers attracted more residents. The Pleasant View United Methodist Church, organized in 1867, built its first building in 1870 on land donated by freed slave Joshua Hill. According to tradition, the basement of the original church was dug at night by lantern light because the trustees worked on farms during the day. The nearby Shiloh Baptist Church began in 1872, and the Monumental African Methodist Episcopal Church was built before 1925.<sup>16</sup>

The district has changed drastically over the past decades. "The Port Republic Road neighborhood retained a vibrant mix of business and religious and educational institutions into the mid-twentieth century. The business sector gradually declined during the second half of the twentieth century and presently the neighborhood is almost entirely residential. Interest in the neighborhood's heritage has grown steadily in recent years."<sup>17</sup>

Some properties have fallen into a state of neglect and others have been replaced by or converted to multi-family rental units. Younger generations, not

feeling restricted to live in the traditionally black section of town, branched out to all areas of the city and beyond. As the black population took advantage of integration, better educational opportunities, and decreased discrimination, the sense of community cohesiveness waned.

In 2000 Portia Bass and Estella Randolph



The first Shiloh Baptist Church in 1872.

sparked a revitalization effort when they spearheaded the effort for historical recognition. They saw the designation as a way to celebrate the neighborhood's heritage. According to Ms. Randolph, "The bigger picture is that people are getting back in touch with their ancestry; they are finding pride in their heritage. If we dream together, we can see what this street used to look like and what it could be in the future."<sup>18</sup>

Shiloh Baptist – Port Republic Road Historic District church  
celebrates 130 years

(extracted from an article in the monthly newspaper, Augusta Country)

The historic Shiloh Baptist Church, a place of worship for generations of Port Republic Road area residents, commemorated its 130<sup>th</sup> year with a special service in March. A marker and kiosk are planned for the site as part of the district's inclusion in the National Register of Historic Places.

The Reverend Warne Dawkins reflected on what it means to lead a church with such deep roots: "A church with a 130-year-existence rests on the assurance and divine leadership of a loving Savior. I am thankful and appreciative to draw from a well that will never run dry and to be supplied from a source that will never be exhausted."

The festivities continued with a meal in the fellowship hall and afternoon program. Stanley Woodfolk from Charlottesville and the Gospel Choir of Evergreen Baptist Church were special guests. Long-time church member Lois Perry gave a narrative of church history, which had been documented and preserved by the late Lillie Mae Johnson. The Reverend Mr. Dawkins credited Mrs. Johnson with protecting the church history and leaving a roadmap to tell future generations from whence they came. Characterizing Mrs. Johnson as "a lovely woman of God and a faithful member of the church" he likened her work as church historian to that of Luke, author of the Biblical book of Acts, who recorded the history of the early church. "Her living legacy is that she kept the records of the church so well that Shiloh Baptist Church is now a historical landmark."<sup>19</sup>

Mrs. Johnson served as historian for over thirty years and wrote the first historical narrative in 1967. Sadly, she died only weeks before the milestone anniversary celebration. The granddaughter of an Albemarle County slave, Mrs. Johnson was born in 1917 in a house near Shiloh. She was one of seven children born to Albert and Lillie Darcus Simms. Her father was a Baptist minister who led the Shiloh congregation for seventeen years, from 1895 to 1912.

Mrs. Johnson's account cites a nineteenth-century blacksmith shop as the first gathering place for the church. The location she described is the now-vacant

building on Ohio Street near the Florence Avenue Bridge, which was a one-room log church built by Methodists in 1824. The original part is still standing, though there have been architectural changes over the years.<sup>20</sup>

The Waynesboro Historical Commission researched the beginnings of Shiloh, reporting, "Their earliest written record is an 1872 deed for a log cabin on the corner of Minden Place. After three years of growth a larger frame building was built on what is now the parking lot on the north side of the church. A new church was built on the same site in 1924."<sup>21</sup> Contractor Jacob Fuller constructed the 1924 building.

Not much is known about the early church leaders, as no records were kept. The first seven pastors were the Reverend Mr. Gordon, the Reverend Mr. Diggs, the Reverend Mr. Alex Lias, the Reverend Benjamin Carr, the Reverend A. Allen, the Reverend Mr. Moore, and the Reverend J.O. Wright.<sup>22</sup> Mrs. Johnson listed these leaders since 1895: Albert J. Simms (seventeen years), L.B. Goodall (seven years), Clinton H. Harris (twenty-seven years), Eugene C. Watts (ten years), Walter L. Parrish (four years), William C. Butts (five years) and Allen T. Crawley (twenty-seven years).<sup>23</sup>

Shiloh has stood the test of time. Started only a few years after slavery was abolished, the congregation weathered the storms of changing race relations. From the place of worship, it is only a short distance up the hill to the Black History Museum at the Rosenwald Community Center, housed in the school that was no longer needed after integration.

The 300-member congregation has many reasons to be proud. The number of years of existence alone is a great accomplishment. Their Romanesque-inspired building is visually appealing, with a striking interior of rich crimson carpet, tall stained glass windows and brass chandeliers. Shiloh's choirs are known far and wide for their incredible sound. But most important are the individuals who make up the congregation – men, women, and children who have a strong and enduring commitment to church, family, and community.

Historian and author Lillian Clark said it best when she described the efforts of the early black populace of the city of Waynesboro: "When there was total segregation and flagrant and public denial of every human right and opportunity, the forefathers of Waynesboro prayed harder, worked harder, and relentlessly held to their faith and determination to help make this corner of the world better for their children and grandchildren. Many of the pioneers and patriots have passed on, but their lives of struggle and deeds of conquest are forever visible in the inner eye of our mind and in the heart of our soul. As long as there is one person who remembers, they will never truly be dead."<sup>24</sup>



Ellen Thompson Darcus had been a slave in Albemarle County before the Civil War. She was Lillie Mae Johnson's grandmother. This photo was taken in New York in the early 1920s.



Albert J. Simms was Lillie Mae Johnson's father and the pastor of Shiloh Baptist Church from 1895 to 1912.



Lillie Mae Johnson as a young woman.

Lillie Mae Johnson

June 16, 1917 – February 26, 2002

"Those who knew her would attest to her strong will and tireless energy when it came to a fight for what she believed in or counseling young people or just being a good neighbor or friend."

### Endnotes

<sup>1</sup> Leslie A. Giles and J. Daniel Pezzoni, "Port Republic Road Historic District," National Register of Historic Places Registration Form, 2001, Section 8, 28-29.

<sup>2</sup> Augusta County Deed Book 39:537 and Augusta County Deed Book 92:43.

<sup>3</sup> Thomas E. Elliott and Alice Wood, "The John Crouse House," Virginia Department of Historic Resources Preliminary Information Form, 1998.

<sup>4</sup> Giles and Pezzoni, Section 8, 28.

<sup>5</sup> Jedediah Hotchkiss, "Maps of The Town of Waynesboro, The Village of North Waynesboro, and the Village of Waynesboro Junction, South River District, Augusta County, Virginia 1884" in Illustrated Historical Atlas of Augusta County, Virginia, 1885.

<sup>6</sup> U.S. Census and George R. Hawke, A History of Waynesboro, Virginia to 1900 (published by the Waynesboro Historical Commission, printed by Humphries Press, Waynesboro, Va., 1997), 136-137.

<sup>7</sup> "Census of Colored Voters," Waynesboro, Va., 1923.

<sup>8</sup> David Ownby, interview with author, March 2002. Lillian Clark, Arlette Mason, Howard S. Clayborne, Jr., Lewis A. Lytle III, "Waynesboro's Black Community: Historical Reflections" (Never published. Photocopied and hard bound in Waynesboro Public Library, c. 1992), 3-6.

<sup>9</sup> Augusta County Deed Book 202:345.

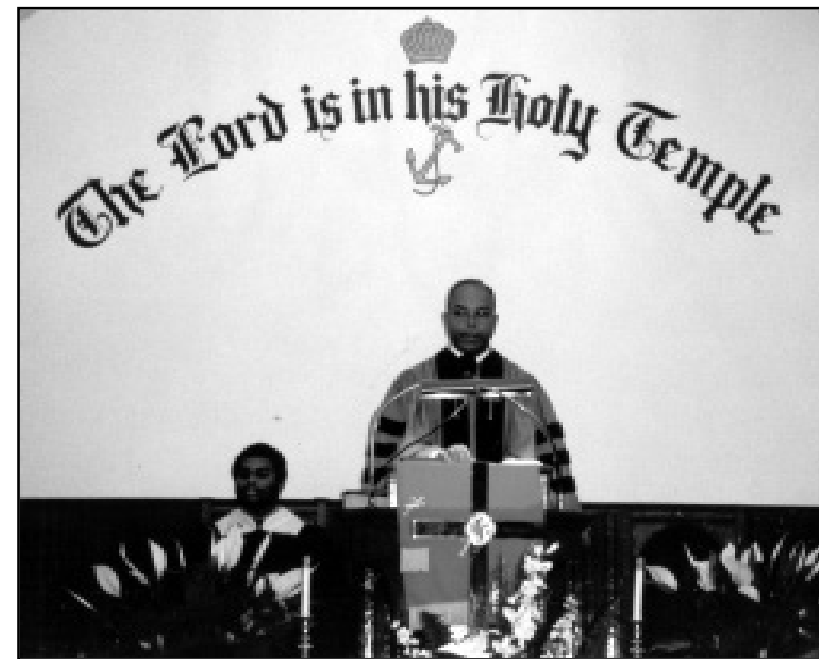
<sup>10</sup> Edward Nelson Palmer, "Negro Secret Societies," Social Forces 23, December 1944, 207-212.

<sup>11</sup> Waynesboro (Augusta County, Virginia) City Directory, 1950-1951.

<sup>12</sup> Staunton Vindicator, 3 April 1874 and 17 April 1874.



Shiloh Baptist Church in 2002.



The Reverend Warne Dawkins of Shiloh Baptist Church.

Susanne Simmons, "Pride is thread connecting heritage to future," Augusta Country, November 1995.

<sup>14</sup> Seymour Brody, Jewish Heroes and Heroines in America, 1996.

<sup>15</sup> Augusta County Deed Book 102:526.

<sup>16</sup> L. Clark, et al, 67-68.

<sup>17</sup> L. Giles and J. Pezzoni, Section 8, 35.

<sup>18</sup> Daily News Leader, Staunton, Va., 8 November 1997 and 9 August 2002.

<sup>19</sup> Reverend Warne Dawkins, correspondence with author, March 2002.

<sup>20</sup> Lillie Mae Johnson, "History of Shiloh Baptist Church," 1967.

<sup>21</sup> Joe Nutt, Historical Sketches of African-American Churches (Past & Present) of Augusta County, Staunton, Waynesboro, & Vicinity (Published by the author with a grant from the Virginia Foundation for the Humanities and Public Policy, Charlottesville, Va., 2001), 181-182.

<sup>22</sup> Allen T. Crawley, "One Hundred Years of Christian Service, Shiloh Baptist Church," 1972.

<sup>23</sup> Lillie Mae Johnson, "History of Shiloh Baptist Church," 1967.

<sup>24</sup> L. Clark, et al, 1.

# Relic of Two Revolutions

By Dr. Turk McCleskey

Presented at the Augusta County Historical Society's Annual Banquet, 16 April 2002, in Staunton, Virginia. Turk McCleskey is a professor in the Virginia Military Institute's Department of History.



The Shiloh Baptist Male Chorus.

For history professors, April is the month of awakening: each year about this time another class of college sophomores finally accepts that history involves both facts and interpretation. What we don't tell them is how frustrating can be the search for enough facts to warrant even a modest interpretation.

This is not a new problem. One of Augusta County's most important nineteenth-century chroniclers, Joseph A. Waddell, lamented that "The annals of the county during most of the war of the Revolution are quite meager." Waddell especially regretted the absence of first person accounts: "How invaluable would be a diary written, even crudely, by a resident of the county during the war, telling about the raising of troops, the departure of individuals and companies for the army, the rumors which agitated the community, and the simple events of common life! But nothing of the kind exists."<sup>1</sup> Of course Waddell knew he was overstating the case, but his remark clearly rose from the perennial hope of historians: that if we turn over enough rocks, one of them will be a Rosetta Stone capable of unlocking a vast new understanding of the past.

All of us today who are interested in Augusta County's eighteenth-century history have shared Waddell's frustration, and if Augusta County's citizens left too few records, its visitors were even worse. In the spring of 1782, for example, a French general, the Chevalier de Chastellux, briefly visited Augusta County; as he exited the Valley of Virginia by way of the James River Gap, Chastellux shot a treed groundhog and then described it in tedious detail, squandering a whole paragraph on what for us is a common nuisance. To be fair, Chastellux was a mature forty-eight years old, a subordinate of General Rochambeau, fresh from the Yorktown campaign and surrender in the previous summer and autumn of 1781.<sup>2</sup> His tour of the Valley of Virginia thus was a vacation from more serious

concerns, so perhaps we can excuse his distraction—but fourteen years later, a young, carefree member of the French royalty had no such excuse.

That French royal visitor to Augusta County was the duc d'Orleans, who visited the county as a twenty-three-year-old exile in 1796. Historians remember this particular duc d'Orleans as Louis-Philippe, King of the French from 1830 to 1848, a monarch sometimes called “the citizen king” who was known for his unpretentious public manners: most famously he carried his own umbrella when he went outside. Louis-Philippe's Orleans branch of the royal family was junior to the Bourbon branch, but after the Bourbon king Charles X was deposed, Louis-Philippe ascended to the throne in 1830. In 1796 and 1797, that was all far in the future; however, Louis-Philippe's monarchical prospects looked impossibly remote when he and his two younger brothers fled war-torn Europe and the mortal dangers of post-revolutionary France.<sup>3</sup>

Such bits of French history are all well and good, but what about the question that's uppermost to us: never mind the middle-aged latter-day king—what did the twenty-three-year-old exile say about Augusta County? As he described in his conscientiously-maintained journal, Louis Philippe followed the Great Wagon Road up the Valley from the Potomac River, journeying southwest all the way to Abingdon, and eventually to Tennessee and Kentucky. Given his route, we might well hope for fresh information and insights about Augusta County in the early years of the new republic, but instead, well, you be the judge:

We...slept in Staunton at the General Washington Inn, proprietor Peter Heiskell, a Pennsylvania German. Excellent inn. Staunton's environs are quite hilly. The town consists of about 300 houses or families, for each family has its own. Bad weather during the day.<sup>4</sup>

What about the next day? “Oaks on the southern slopes are greening,” we are informed by the author's own footnote. “We glimpse the northern mountains to our right. To our left rise others. Between the two ranges the land is varied, sometimes copses and groves, then smaller ranges cutting through the valleys, etc.” This is precisely where I threw the book across the room in frustration. But in the sentences that followed, the last of his remarks on Augusta County, Louis-Philippe broke free of conventional landscape litanies: “We dined at David Steel's house halfway to Lexington. This poor unfortunate was captured by [T]arleton's corps, and after he had surrendered they fetched him two blows of the saber to the head, so he says, bashing out a piece of bone that his wife showed us. M[onsieur] de Chastellux stayed with them on his way to and from the Natural Bridge. Steele told us funny stories.”<sup>5</sup> So: the future king's final sixty-eight

words about Augusta County concerned David Steele.

Local records can add to this evocative glimpse. In early 1789—over seven years before Louis-Philippe's visit—the Augusta County Court recognized the serious wounds that David Steele received during the Revolutionary War, and provided him with a certificate to that effect—a necessary administrative step toward a Virginia state pension:

On the motion of David Steele to be allowed a pension he having produced a certificate from Doct[or] Alexander Humphreys, that he is disabled from labour by wounds and proved to the satisfaction of the Court that he received the said Wounds in the Service of the United States at the Battle of Guilford [Courthouse] on the 15th day of March 1781, that he belonged to the militia of this County, is aged 30 years, and resides in this county 135 miles from the seat of government [i.e., Richmond], the same is ordered to be certified.<sup>6</sup>

The court was characteristically terse, perhaps tempting us to join Waddell's lament about insufficient evidence. Still, sketchy though they are, can these facts support a useful interpretation? Can we detect any larger significance in this encounter between former soldier and future king? Historian Henry Steele Commager, who wrote a preface for the English translation of Louis-Philippe's diary, certainly thought so. For Commager, the key question was, what effect did America have on “the citizen king”? Commager hinted broadly that having drunk deeply of democratic frontier springs at an impressionable age, the monarch Louis-Philippe displayed, well, American virtues.<sup>7</sup> If so, then it follows that meeting with yeomen heroes of the Revolutionary War—men such as David Steele—demonstrated to Louis-Philippe an important lesson about the virtuous foundation of the new American republic.

Commager's question and answer certainly make patriotic sense to Americans—and, patriotism aside, it's always fun to needle the French about what they owe to American culture—but as historians we have to pause. A historian's question really must have more than one possible answer, so let's bring a different query to Louis-Philippe's dinner with David Steele: What can Louis-Philippe's presence at David Steele's table tell us about Augusta County's place in the Atlantic World?<sup>8</sup>

Let's start with a cryptic sentence in Louis-Philippe's own account: “M[onsieur] de Chastellux stayed with [the Steeles] on his way to and from the Natural Bridge.”<sup>9</sup> Remember the Chevalier de Chastellux? The touring French general of 1782? Here—abruptly—the chevalier pops into and then out of Louis-Philippe's diary. It's an odd little cameo appearance that leaves modern readers wondering, what was the source of Louis-Philippe's remark that Chastellux also had visited



David Steele?

The question has two possible answers: either Steele told Louis-Philippe...or Louis-Philippe already knew. My money is on the Frenchman's foreknowledge, and here's why: Louis-Philippe recorded in his journal that Chastellux stayed with the Steeles "on his way to and from the Natural Bridge." But that's incorrect, on two counts: Chastellux stopped at Steele's mill and ordinary for a meal, in the course of a day's travel from the vicinity of modern Waynesboro to the vicinity of Timber Ridge, five miles northeast of Lexington. He didn't stay—although that may be simply a translation discrepancy—and more importantly, he did not return. Instead, he and his party observed the Natural Bridge and exited the Valley through the James River Gap—to the misfortune of that groundhog.<sup>10</sup>

Today you and I can read Chastellux's narrative, *Travels in North America in the Years 1780, 1781 and 1782*, in an English translation published for the Institute of Early American History and Culture in 1963. But in the eighteenth century, Chastellux's *Travels* appeared in its first full and authorized printing in Paris, in 1786. So which chain of events is more likely: did David Steele misrepresent to Louis-Philippe some details of Chastellux's visit fourteen years earlier, and did Louis-Philippe write down Steele's account without further explication of Chastellux's identity? Or did Louis-Philippe's sole but familiar mention of Chastellux reflect an imperfect recollection of Chastellux's book—a volume Louis-Philippe may have read as early as 1786 at age thirteen, before joining the tumult of Jacobin politics, fighting in a war against Austria, escaping the French Revolution's Reign of Terror, visiting Lapland, and crossing the North Atlantic Ocean during an untimely season, any one of which might understandably blur his memories of minor details from Chastellux's account.<sup>11</sup>

Circumstantial evidence strongly favors the latter explanation of prior knowledge and permits an entertaining after-dinner exercise, but could we push the analysis just a little farther?—after all, it is April. What significance may we attach to Louis-Philippe's retracing of a portion of Chastellux's journey? Perhaps it is only coincidence—after all, the Wagon Road was for both men a logical highway. But perhaps—and here's where we get to squeeze the



Louis Philippe

evidence—perhaps Louis-Philippe was responding to Chastellux's earlier and much more vivid 1782 account of lunch with the Steeles.

Let Chastellux describe David Steele for us:

he appeared sluggish and inactive. I inquired the reason, and he told me he had been in a languishing state ever since the battle of Guilford Courthouse, where he had received fifteen or sixteen sword wounds. He had not, like the Romans, a crown to attest his valor; nor, like the French, either pension or certificate of honor; instead of these he had a piece of his own skull, which his wife brought out to show me. I certainly little expected to find here in the American wilderness such deplorable traces of European steel; but I was the most touched to learn that it was after he had received his first wound, and was made prisoner, that he had been thus cruelly slashed. This unfortunate young man related to me how, when beaten down and bathed in blood, he had still had presence of mind enough to think that his cruel enemies would not want to leave any witness or victim of their barbarity, and that there remained to him no other way of saving his life than to pretend to have lost it. Oh, for the all-seeing eye of Divine Justice to discover and recognize the authors of such a crime!! Oh, for the voice of Stentor and for Fame's trumpet to consign them to the abhorrence of present and future ages! And to proclaim to sovereigns, generals, and all chiefs that the atrocities which they tolerate or leave unpunished will one day accumulate upon their heads, and that they will be held in execration by a posterity more touched by feeling and more enlightened than we yet are!<sup>12</sup>

Stentor then retreated and Chastellux completed his account with descriptions of Steele's wife ("young and pretty") and of lunch (cakes, butter, milk). It was these things "and above all, the interest with which Mr. Steele inspired us, [that] made us pass agreeably the time needed" to rest horses before completing a grueling day's journey.<sup>13</sup>

If you'll recall how closely censored was the French press of the ancient regime, this passage will acquire a more subtle and metaphorical meaning. The soldier David Steele becomes a surrogate for all victims of tyranny, and Chastellux's explosive denunciation of Steele's tormenters becomes a strongly worded caution to the then-current King of France, the doomed Louis XVI. Chastellux was saying, in effect, "This naturally noble young American ordinary-keeper far more deserves a crown than many of his French social superiors." Imagine how this impassioned and politically charged description of an Augusta County veteran may have reverberated portentously to an idealistic royal teenager during the French Revolution, a teenager who within a few years had his own opportunity to visit the living metaphor, in Augusta County, and to examine for himself David Steele's Revolutionary relic.

I began tonight with an acknowledgment of Joseph Waddell's frustration over what he characterized as a shortage of authentic voices from the Revo-

lutionary War, so I think it's appropriate to let him have the last word on David Steele: "David Steele...was cut down in the [Guilford Courthouse] retreat and left for dead. He revived, and came home and lived to old age...Several persons who often saw the old soldier, have informed us that his face was not disfigured at all. His skull was cleft by a sabre and to the end of his days he wore a silver plate over the spot."<sup>14</sup> You see, what David Steele knew, but mentioned neither to Chastellux nor to Louis-Philippe, is that he already was wearing a crown of the new republic.

### Endnotes

<sup>1</sup> Joseph A. Waddell, *Annals of Augusta County, Virginia, from 1726 to 1871* (Staunton, Virginia, 1886; second ed. 1902), 238-239.

<sup>2</sup> The marquis de Chastellux, *Travels in North America, in the Years 1780, 1781 and 1782*. Translated by Howard C. Rice, Jr. 2 vols. (Chapel Hill, North Carolina, 1963), vol. 2, 410-411. For Rice's biographical notes about the marquis, see "The Author and His Background," *Ibid.*, vol. 1, 2-25.

<sup>3</sup> Henry Steele Commager, "Preface," in Louis-Philippe, King of the French, 1773-1850. *Diary of My Travels in America*. Translated by Stephen Becker (New York, 1977), 1-8, and Stephen Becker, "Translator's Note," in *Ibid.*, 9. For biographies of Louis-Philippe, see T.E.B. Howarth, *Citizen King: The Life of Louis-Philippe, King of the French* (London, 1961), and Pierre de la Gorce, *Louis-Philippe (1830-1848)* (Paris, 1931). I am indebted to my Virginia Military Institute colleagues, Dr. Bruce C. Vandervort and Dr. C. Douglas Harmon, for their guidance to secondary sources on French history.

<sup>4</sup> Louis-Philippe, *Diary of My Travels*, 44. The map in this work depicting Louis-Philippe's travels in western Virginia is unreliable; see for example the mistaken detour by way of Charleston, West Virginia.

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>6</sup> *Augusta County Court Orders*, vol. 20 (20 May 1786—17 February 1789), p. 678, entry dated 21 January 1789, microfilm, Library of Virginia. For an authoritative narrative of the Guilford House battle illustrated with the high-quality maps required to make sense of that complicated struggle, see Thomas E. Baker, *Another Such Victory* (New York, 1981).

<sup>7</sup> Commager, "Preface," in Louis-Philippe, *Diary of My Travels*, 1-8.

<sup>8</sup> Historian Richard White discusses the proper framing of historical questions in "Indian Peoples and the Natural World: Asking the Right Questions," in Donald L. Fixico, ed., *Rethinking American Indian History* (Albuquerque, New Mexico, 1997).

<sup>9</sup> Louis-Philippe, *Diary of My Travels*, 44.

<sup>10</sup> Chastellux, *Travels in North America*, vol. 2, 401-411.

<sup>11</sup> Commager, "Preface," in Louis-Philippe, *Diary of My Travels*, 2-3.

<sup>12</sup> Chastellux, *Travels in North America*, vol. 2, 402-403. Emphasis added.

<sup>13</sup> *Ibid.*, 403. Emphasis added.

<sup>14</sup> Waddell, *Annals of Augusta County*, 283.

# Origins of the Psalmody-Hymnody Controversy in Presbyterian meeting houses in 18th-century Virginia

By Dr. Jane Moore Bolen

In June of 2002, this paper was presented at the XIV Ulster-American Heritage Symposium sponsored by the University of South Carolina and held in Rock Hill, South Carolina.

Both traditionally and historically, the biblical Book of Psalms was the ancient hymnbook of Israel. From the time of David (1000 B.C.) to the time of Christ, the Israelites learned to express their praise of God through the singing of psalms. And while this is universally understood to be true of the Old Testament church, it is seldom recognized that the psalter was also an essential feature of worship in the New Testament Church. In fact, the psalter was the primary hymnal of the New Testament Church throughout most of its history.<sup>1</sup>

Among the church fathers, Tertullian (of the second century) and Jerome (mid-fourth to fifth century), testified that psalm-singing received the strongest commendation from Chrysostom and Augustine. But the fifth century marks the beginning of the "Dark Ages" and the onset of a number of ecclesiastical developments—regretted by the laity—and, in retrospect, by the Protestants. Among these "developments" was the disappearance of congregational singing, for singing became the sole preserve of the monasteries. Even then, it was the psalms that the monks read and sang with an almost fanatical zeal. For the next thousand years the psalms inspired the monastic orders.<sup>2</sup>

It took the Reformation of the sixteenth century to revive the practice of congregational singing of the psalter, the texts of which continued to dominate the church music scene until the middle of the eighteenth century. Jean Calvin the French Huguenot who founded the Reformed churches was arguably the man most responsible for the sixteenth-century revival of Psalmody in the vernacular. In the preface to his Psalter of 1543, he wrote, "we shall not find better songs nor more fitting ones for the purpose (of worship) than the Psalms of David; the Holy Spirit Himself spoke them—and when we sing them, we are

certain that God puts in our mouths true worship, as if He Himself were singing in us to exalt His Glory."<sup>3</sup>

Few people realize that the Reformed and Presbyterian churches were exclusively psalm singing for over 200 years, as were their independent brethren, the Congregationalists and Baptists. Also, few people realize that the metrical psalms (in The Old Ainsworth Psalter)

crossed the Atlantic on the Mayflower; that metrical psalms were sung by Francis Drake to the Indians in California (from the Sternhold and Hopkins Psalter); and that the first book published in North America was a psalter, the enormously popular Bay Psalm Book. This psalter was the hymnal of American Puritanism, undergoing at least seventy printings through 1773. When the Bay Psalm Book and (that favorite of Ulster-Scots immigrants) the Scottish Psalter of 1650 were finally superseded, it was by a book purported to be yet another psalter: Isaac Watts's The Psalms of David Imitated of 1719.<sup>4</sup>

In Scotland, from which immigrant Ulster Scots trace their roots, the psalms were recognized as the only worship music of the protestant churches—be they called Covenanter, Seceder, or Reformed. Robert Burns, the famed Scottish poet (hardly a "blue-stocking Presbyterian"), immortalized the simple peasant (or cotter) family devotional life in his late eighteenth-century poem, "A Cotter's Saturday Night." In this poem the humble farmer returns home after a week's labor in the unforgiving rocky soil of Scotland. It is evening and all children have come home for the weekly family gathering. Dundee, Martyrs and Elgin mentioned in the poem are psalm tunes.

The cheerfu'supper done, wi' serious face,  
They round the ingle, form a circle wide,  
The sire turns o'er with patriarchal grace  
The big ha'Bible, ance his father's pride.  
His bonnet rev'rently is laid aside.  
His lyart (grey) haffets(side of head) wearing thin and bare;  
Those strains that once did sweet in Zion glide,  
He wales (chooses) a portion with judicious care;  
And 'Let us worship God!' he says with solemn air.



The Cotters Saturday Night, c. 1815.

They chant their artless notes in simple guise,  
 They tune their hearts—by far the noblest aim:  
 Perhaps 'Dundee's' wild-warbling measures rise,  
 Or plaintive 'Martyrs', worthy of the name.  
 Or noble 'Elgin' beats the heaven-ward flame.  
 The sweetest far of Scotia's holy lays;  
 Compar'd with these, Italian trills are tame;  
 The tick'd ear no heart-felt raptures raise;  
 Nae unison hae they with-out Creator's praise.

(The devotional continues)

The priest-like father reads the sacred page—  
 How Abram was the friend of God on high  
 (Then the family prayer)  
 Then kneeling down to Heaven's Eternal King—  
 The saint, the father, and the husband prays.

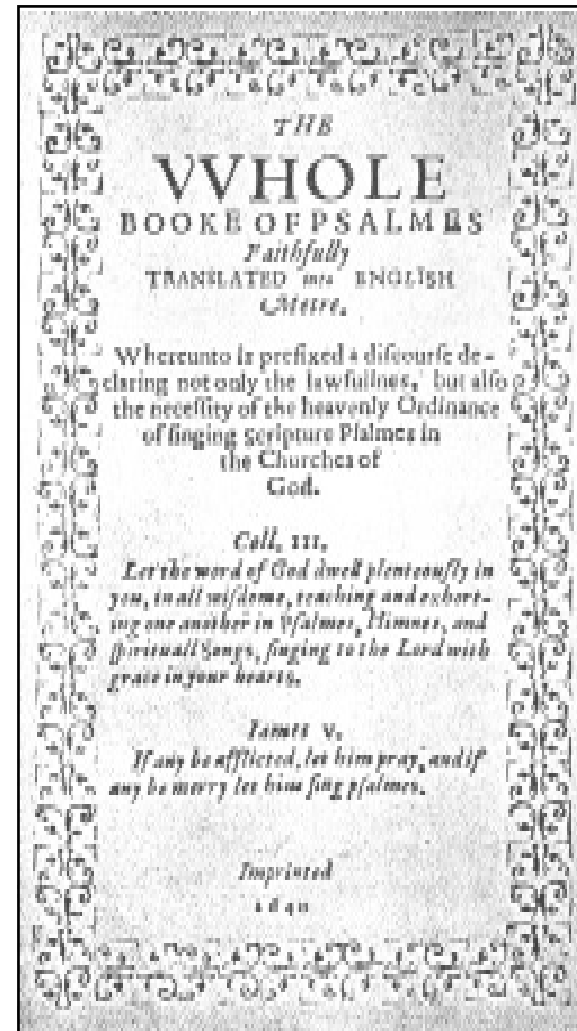
(And the poet concludes)

From scenes like this old Scotia's grandeur springs,  
 That makes her lov'd at home—rever'd abroad;  
 Princes and lords are but the breath of kings,  
 An honest man's the noblest work of God'

O Scotia! My dear—my native soil!  
 For whom my warmest wish to Heav'n is sent!  
 Long may thy hardy sons of rustic toil!  
 Be blest with health, and peace, and sweet content!  
 And Oh! May Heav'n their simple lives prevent  
 From luxury's contagion, weak and vile!  
 Then, howe'er crowns and coronets be rent,  
 A virtuous populace may rise the while,  
 And stand a wall of fire around their much-lov'd isle.<sup>5</sup>

Burns was contemporary with the last and largest of the immigrations from Scotland to Ireland and to the colonies. And Burns understood, first-hand, the life of the cotter. Poor farming prospects in Scotland had caused his father, William Burness, a simple ploughman, to move his family from rocky farm to rocky farm in search of a living and a way to provide an education for his seven children.

A generation earlier in England, however, there was a general loosening of some of the stricter doctrines of Calvinism and a liberalization of thinking, particularly in the protestant churches, those independent of the Anglican faith. In early seventeenth century England, a typical Sunday Service in the Congregational Church consisted of an opening extempore prayer (not from the Anglican prayerbook) by the pastor; a metrical psalm lined out by an elder and sung congregationally without instrumental accompaniment, the employment of which was thought to have been condemned in Amos, V: 23 and



Title page of "The Bay Psalm Book" that was published in 1640.

Daniel III: 5, 7, 15. A sermon followed with concluding prayers and blessing. No Bible readings were included and no set prayers—not even the Lord's Prayer. After communion, another psalm was sung; the purpose of this informal, spontaneous format was to place the emphasis on the inspiration and leading of the Holy Spirit.<sup>6</sup>

However, into the community of free thinkers, where there was this loosening of stricter doctrines and a liberalization of thinking, was born Isaac Watts in 1674. This community was called Dissenters or Non-Conformists; Watts's father, one of the leaders, was imprisoned twice for his religious views. Isaac was schooled, learning Greek, Latin and Hebrew under the rector of All Saints (Anglican) and headmaster of the Grammar School in

Southampton. His taste for verse was recognized very early and he was offered a scholarship for a university education. As members of dissenting churches were not permitted to attend Oxford or Cambridge, or even to go into professions such as law or the established clergy, Isaac was further educated at the Dissenting Academy in Stoke Newington, London.

Even as a small boy, Watts thought and talked in rhyme and many legends have resulted. Once, during family prayers, he began to laugh. His father asked him why. He replied that he had heard a sound and opened his eyes to see a

3

MARTYRS. (C.M.) Scottish Psalter, 1616.

A-men.

(A varied accompaniment for unison singing will be found in the Appendix.)

**111\***

**P**RAISE ye the Lord: with my whole heart  
I will God's praise declare,  
Where the assemblies of the just  
and congregations are.

2 The whole works of the Lord our God  
are great above all measure,  
Sought out they are of ev'ry one  
that doth therein take pleasure.

3 His work most honourable is,  
most glorious and pure,  
And his untainted righteousness  
for ever doth endure.

4 His works most wonderful he hath  
made to be thought upon:

3

The Lord is gracious, and he is  
full of compassion.

5 He giveth meat unto all those  
that truly do him fear;  
And evermore his covenant  
he in his mind will bear.

6 He did the power of his works  
unto his people show,  
When he the heathen's heritage  
upon them did bestow.

7 His handy-works are truth and right;  
all his commands are sure:

8 And, done in truth and uprightness,  
they evermore endure.

9 He sent redemption to his folk;  
his covenant for aye  
He did command: holy his name  
and rev'rend is always.

10 Wisdom's beginning is God's fear:  
good understanding they  
Have all that his commands fulfil:  
his praise endures for aye.

mouse climbing a rope in a corner and had immediately thought: "A little mouse, for want of stairs, Ran up a rope to say his prayers."

His father thought this was irreverent and proceeded to administer corporal punishment—in the midst of which, Isaac cried out: "Father, father, mercy take—And I will no more verses make." Watts left the academy at age twenty and spent two years at home. It was at this time that he wrote the bulk of his hymns and spiritual songs. At first they were sung from manuscripts and only published in 1707 as his first edition of Hymns and Spiritual Songs of 1703 when Watts was twenty-four years old. At age twenty-six he became tutor and

chaplain to the family of Sir John Hartopp of Leicestershire and assistant minister at Mark Lane Congregational Chapel in London. Several years later he was promoted to full pastordship. After his health failed, he spent the rest of his life (thirty-six more years) at the home of a wealthy Dissenter, Sir Thomas Abney in Herfordshire. During his lifetime, Watts wrote about 600 hymns, but his best efforts were turned out between his graduation from school when he was twenty and his taking a teaching job at twenty-two.

Watts's most published book was his Psalms of David Imitated in the Language Of the New Testament, 1719, which his father challenged him to write after hearing Isaac complain about the poor quality of writing in the metrical psalters of his day. Immediately, there was controversy even in the Dissenter Churches in England for which he had paraphrased the psalms. In explaining his reasons for these so-called "poetic paraphrases of the Psalms" he wrote:

Where the Psalmist describes religion by the fear of God, I have often joined faith and love to it. Where (the Psalmist) speaks of the pardon of sin through the mercies of God, I have added the merits of a Saviour. Where (the Psalmist) talks of sacrificing goats or bullocks, I rather choose to mention the sacrifice of Christ, the Lamb of God. Where (the Psalmist) promises abundance of wealth, honor and long life, I have changed some of these typical blessings for grace, glory and life eternal—these are brought to light by the Gospel and promised in the New Testament. And I am fully satisfied, that more honor is done to our blessed Saviour by speaking His Name, His Graces, His Actions in His language, according to the brighter discoveries He hath now made, than by going back again to the Jewish forms of worship, and the languages in types and figures.<sup>7</sup>

Besides over 600 hymns, Watts published fifty-two other works, including a book of logic used in the universities, books on grammar, pedagogy, ethics, psychology, astronomy, geography, three volumes of sermons, and twenty-nine treatises on theology. After his death in 1748, a monument to Watts was erected in Westminster Abbey. His greatest monument, however, are the hymns which are still used by the church today. The index in the Presbyterian hymnal of 1955 (The Hymnbook) shows 115 psalm paraphrases of which twenty are attributed



Isaac Watts, 1674-1748

to the pen of Isaac Watts. In the newest Presbyterian hymnal of 1990 (The Presbyterian Hymnal) the number of hymn texts by Isaac Watts is only thirteen, and four, (not psalm paraphrases) were not included in the earlier volume. Among the most familiar and beloved in today's repertoire are "Joy To the World," "When I Survey the Wondrous Cross," "Am I a Soldier of the Cross?," "Come We That Love the Lord," and "Oh God, Our Help in Ages Past."

Watts generally avoided controversial or partisan language in his hymns and for practical reasons he used standard metres—that is, a set number of syllables in a line or phrase of the poem. Only two hymns in his Hymnbook used other than Long Metre, Short Metre, or Common Metre and for the most part he used tunes that were already known. However, his use of the first person (singular and plural), his natural and homely mode of expression—readily understood by the masses—and his use of images and metaphors that touched the heart, brought an entirely new warmth and spirit to what had become the tedious dryness of the services. For this same purpose, he criticized the "lining out" of hymns and urged congregations to stand up while singing.

It is probably not too much to say that Watts set the style for English hymns of the next two centuries. After Watts, singing in worship had a new meaning. It was not only obedience to God on the part of each individual worshipper, but also a corporate expression of devotion—and as such should be couched in language that had both aesthetic and emotional appeal. The same ideas were naturally extended to the music among the Congregationalists in England. As a result, efforts were made to raise the artistic level of singing by instructing members of each congregation in matters of rhythm, intonation and part-singing. In the Colonies, musical reform came before textual change. A series of well-educated ministers, mostly Harvard graduates, published tracts urging the superiority of "singing by note" to the inherited oral traditions which they called the "old way," the "usual way" or the "common way" of singing.

One of the practical supports of this reform in congregational singing came from singing tutors produced in New England. Several tutors introduced a notational system of letters on the staff which was both an adaptation of a sixteenth century method and a precursor of the shape-note system of 1891. Singing schools were set up and method books went into many editions.

The question arises, how did this theological adaptation and "sophisticated musical training" impact the Ulster Scots who came down from Pennsylvania and settled the Valley of Virginia? Inherent in Reformed theology of the Presbyterian faith is the basic right of every believer to interpret the scriptures according to the leading of the Holy Spirit. This makes, of course, for many divergent

opinions, which then leads to individuation within the various churches, and inevitably to church divisions. The principle issues before immigration from Scotland to Ireland and the colonies were in the matters of church government, civil and state-church authority, and worship formats.

In the Colonies, where disputes over church government with the hierarchy were no longer binding, the church fathers turned once more to theological orthodoxy. Most of the ministers who briefly served the meeting house-churches in the Shenandoah Valley settlements in the middle eighteenth century were sent from Pennsylvania or New England. Many of the settlers had been exposed to the different movements within the Presbyterian Church in Scotland and had strong opinions about the role of each church member in such matters as selection of a minister and worship format. The Associate Presbytery, for example had in Scotland (1733) been formed in protest of the practice of lay patronage, i.e., an influential lay person, naming the minister. This protest movement grew rapidly and penetrated the Virginia colony in the Valley. To "Conservative" Presbyterians, adherence to The Westminster Confession of Faith, the worship format they had known in their churches in Scotland and Ireland, plus the privilege of selecting their own minister were uppermost issues.

And at one point, those who held to these traditions were actively looking for an Associate Presbyterian minister who could lead them in the same manner. During this period in the middle of the eighteenth century when the Shenandoah Valley was being settled, there was a very influential religious movement known as the "Great Awakening" taking place in New England. This movement was started by Jonathan Edwards, minister of the Congregational Church in Northampton, Massachusetts, in 1734. As the movement developed, it aroused in congregations the need for a revival in their social, familial, and spiritual lives. One author has summed up the event as follows:

Itinerant ministers presented powerful messages of Salvation to their hearers. These messages ultimately provided early Americans with a greater sense of nationality, and had a lasting effect upon the manner in which the people in the American colonies viewed themselves, their relationships with each other, and their faith.

In the southern colonies, however, the Great Awakening was very often an unwelcome challenge to the established and privileged position of the upper classes. As in other colonies, Virginia's leaders looked down upon traveling evangelists, for, like lay ministers, these roving Awakeners (as they were known) conjured up a world without properly constituted authority.<sup>8</sup>

Where this movement was received in Presbyterian congregations of Virginia, this form of revival had more than a religious effect. "It was indeed the



first mass movement that was to bring about a social and political upheaval in Virginia—the first breach (we might say) in the ranks of privilege.” Awakening ministers, even in the South, emphasized the conversion experience, equality in human affairs, tolerance, and the democratic spirit. The movement brought about a change in values that affected politics and daily life.

It apparently created within the common man “a new feeling of self-worth. People assumed new responsibilities in religious affairs and became skeptical of dogma and authority. These attitudes were the beginnings of a new sense of independence and equality that would set the stage for the American Revolution.” The Presbyterian meeting houses were not unaffected by the frenzy that this movement brought to the colonies. Yet, there were sharp differences of opinion; those who were advocates of the Great Awakening were singled out and became known as the “New Lights,” and its detractors or opponents were known as the “Old Side.” Briefly contrasting the preaching of the two points of view, it may be said that the Old Side sermons were more traditional and based on Biblical homiletics; the New Lights ministers were more informal, spontaneous, and emotional. Perhaps the main difference in the two points of view is that the ministers of the Old Side adhered more firmly to the doctrine of the Westminster Confession of Faith and were educated in their ministerial training.<sup>9</sup>

Another result of the Great Awakening was the desire of its adherents to engage in a warmer, more informal language of praise. George Whitefield, who came from England to play a leading part in the revival, introduced many of the hymn paraphrases of Isaac Watts at the meetings—and so they became widely known and sung. It took several decades, however, before they were admitted to the majority of Congregationalist Churches.

In the late eighteenth century, with the arrival of the first Associate Reformed minister in Virginia, the question of proper music for worship arose. Formerly, there had been no question in the minds of Presbyterians that exclusive psalmody was the only scripturally-approved music for public and private devotion. This had been the tradition since the Westminster Confession of Faith had been drafted and adopted in the seventeenth century. However, the popularity of this new music used by revivalists in the Great Awakening reached the ministers and lay people of Presbyterian congregations. The best loved of these new hymns and psalm paraphrases were found in the Psalms of David Imitated by Isaac Watts. These were set to music and caught on immediately. There were many conservative Presbyterians, however, who still held to the belief that the texts of these Hymns were not of Divine Inspiration, and therefore undesirable for worship music. Inevitably, comparisons of poems and

texts of Church fathers and hymnwriters were made in an effort to substantiate one opinion or the other.<sup>10</sup>

An example of this is a comparison of the second and fourth stanzas of Watts’s “When I Survey the Wondrous Cross” and a similar poetic verse written by his contemporary (and one of the Scottish founders of the Associate Presbyterian)—Ralph Erskine. Erskine’s version here is as follows:

Forbid it, Lord, that I should boast, Of ought but Jesus’ cross  
The richest gain, that tempts the most, I count but sordid dross.  
Were the whole globe terrestrial mine, The present were but small,  
Love so amazing, so divine, Demands my life, my all.<sup>11</sup>

Two meeting house congregations, later known as Old Providence Associate Reformed Presbyterian and New Providence Presbyterian Churches, disagreed on the issue of exclusive psalmody as opposed to the introduction of Watts’s psalm paraphrases in the worship service. When the decision was made to use the new music, many members with conservative views left one congregation to join the congregation that preferred the traditional music.

In the Associate Reformed Presbyterian branch (that chose in the eighteenth century to continue the use of exclusive Psalmody) proposals for hymn inclusion came up again and again. But it was not until 1946, some 200 years later, that the governing body voted to include hymns in the worship service. Even then, as there were many churches still opposing it, each individual church was given the option of adopting this inclusion—within its own congregation—when decided upon by congregational vote.<sup>12</sup>

Today, in spite of the fact that most Presbyterian churches have voted to include the hymns and psalm paraphrases in their worship services, there are—and probably will always be—sporadic movements to return to the use of exclusive Psalmody in some of the Reformed and Presbyterian churches.<sup>13</sup>

#### Endnotes

<sup>1</sup> Trinity Psalter: Music edition (Pittsburgh, Pa.: Covenant Publications, 2000), 4.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid., 5.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid.

<sup>4</sup> Ibid.

<sup>5</sup> Poems and Songs of Robert Burns (Glasgow, Scotland: H.B. Langman & Co.), 156ff.

<sup>6</sup> The New Grove Dictionary of Music and Musicians (London: MacMillan, second edition), vol. 6, 296.

<sup>7</sup> “Isaac Watts, Hymnwriter,” compiled by James E. Kiefer, [www.justus.anglican.org/resources/bio/70.html](http://www.justus.anglican.org/resources/bio/70.html), 1-4.

<sup>8</sup> Gary Nash, *The Urban Crucible* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1979), 129.

<sup>9</sup> Nancy T. Sorrells, Katharine L. Brown, and J. Susanne Simmons, *The history of Old Providence Associate Reformed Presbyterian Church, 1742-2001* (Staunton, Va.: Lot’s Wife Publishing Company, 2001), 43ff.

<sup>10</sup> The New Grove Dictionary of Music and Musicians (London, MacMillan, second edition), vol. 18, 79.

<sup>11</sup> Associate Reformed Presbyterian Magazine, March 2001, 34.

<sup>12</sup> Sorrells, Brown, and Simmons, *The history of Old Providence*, 308.

<sup>13</sup> Trinity Psalter, 6.

# Samuel Carson, the Immortal 600, and Old Providence in the Civil War

by J. Susanne Simmons

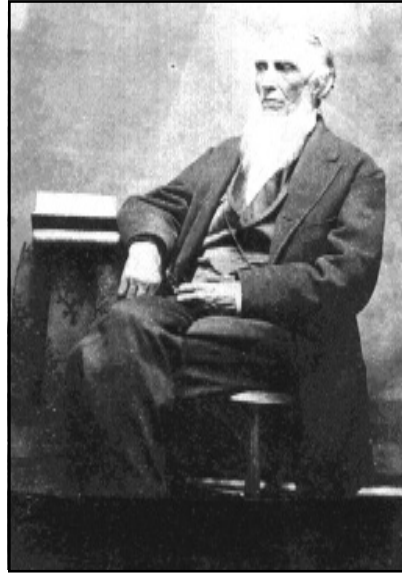
Based on a presentation made to the Augusta County Historical Society at its fall meeting held on October 13, 2002, at the Old Stone Church of Old Providence Associate Reformed Presbyterian Church in Spottswood.

On Confederate Memorial Day in 1916 twenty-two Confederate veterans from Southern Augusta County's Old Providence Church community gathered for a photograph on the steps of the Old Brick Church, which stood across the road from the present church. Lined and weathered faces peered from behind white beards as the men posed for a picture. Old age concealed what had happened to them and their community more than a half-century earlier when two opposing armies of Americans shed each others' blood. Absent from their number was Samuel Frank Carson. Carson, a veteran, a member of Old Providence Associate Reformed Presbyterian Church, and one of the Immortal Six Hundred, had died twenty years earlier. Carson's wartime experience and those of the congregation and its community tells us why inhabitants of the Upper Valley followed Virginia in secession and why they fought so valiantly and tenaciously for a lost cause.

Old Providence's roots run deep in Augusta County. Although its beginnings can be traced to 1743 South Mountain Meeting House, the church did not enjoy stability and prosperity until the arrival of Horatio Thompson, first in 1828 as a missionary and then again in 1833 as the permanent minister. Thompson's early years were ones of growth for Old Providence. Unfortunately, sectional tensions were tearing at the national fabric at the same time. One problem that proved to be insurmountable, both locally and on the national level, was that of slavery.

In 1831, at about the same time that Thompson made his commitment to Old Providence, the Associate Presbyterian Church, the synod to which Old Providence was affiliated, issued an Act of the Synod condemning slavery. The

Act of the Synod arrived at a critical time for Virginia, coinciding with both the Nat Turner Rebellion and the failed abolition debate in the Virginia Constitutional Convention. The results for the Associate church were far-reaching. Five of the eight ministers in the Presbytery of the Carolinas—the presbytery to which Old Providence belonged—left their churches and returned north. Although Thompson was considered a pillar of the presbytery, the 1831 Act did not appear to faze him. A slave owner and a minister in an area where slavery had a firm hold, he was neither inclined to obey the Act nor intimidated by Synod.



Horatio Thompson

The Associate Church issued a stronger resolution in 1839, aimed specifically at the recalcitrant Presbytery of the Carolinas. This one automatically discharged any minister, elder, or member who continued to practice slaveholding and who refused to comply with the Act of the Synod. This resolution could not be ignored and led to the end of



On Memorial Day 1916, a group of Civil War veterans gathered on the steps of Old Providence.



The Old Providence Brick Church dedicated in 1859.

both Thompson's and Old Providence's relationship with the Associate Church. By 1844 Thompson led his church out of the Associate Church and into the Associate Reformed Synod of the South, a synod more amenable to slaveholding.

It appeared to be a good union. The Synod even held its annual meeting at Old Providence in 1857. The event attracted so many spectators that the Staunton paper reported it. Not long after the annual meeting, the congregation decided to build a new meeting house to replace the old stone church. The "new brick church," as it came to be called, was completed and dedicated on December 16, 1859. Members of the church and community alike attended this special service. The news of John Brown's hanging two weeks earlier crowded the news of Old Providence's dedication service out of the local newspaper, however. It is easy to imagine people standing on the porch of the new church discussing pressing national news. Still, at that moment in time, it was perhaps inconceivable that armies of blue and gray would one day sweep past the new church they had worked so hard to build or that many of their friends and neighbors would lose their lives in the Southern cause.

The events leading up to the Civil War are well known. Virginia's waiting game ended when Lincoln called up 75,000 troops on April 15, the day after Fort Sumter surrendered. A special state convention passed an Ordinance of Secession on April 17. Nancy Emerson of Middlebrook, Virginia, the sister of Luther Emerson, minister at Shemariah Presbyterian Church, wrote in her diary "... Lincoln performed a [similar] operation for us at the commencement of the struggle ... his proclamation for 75,000 men united Virginia almost to a man and drove her out of the union as by a thunderbolt."<sup>1</sup> Although unionist support was

strong in the Upper Valley, both Augusta and Rockbridge Counties called-up their militias. Broadsides posted in Staunton and Lexington called for volunteers and young men responded enthusiastically. The men of Old Providence responded. Samuel Frank and Robert F. Carson, sons of Elijah and Polly Hawpe Carson, answered the call to arms along with fifty other men of Old Providence.

Samuel Frank Carson was twenty-nine years old when he joined Company D of the 5<sup>th</sup> Regiment of the Virginia Volunteers. They left Staunton on April 17, 1861, wearing their U.S. Navy caps, blue flannel jackets, and gray trousers and carrying New Testaments presented to each. Their destination was Harpers Ferry where they got their first taste of enemy fire.<sup>2</sup>

Carson corresponded with Annie Harris of Steeles Tavern during the war. Several of those letters survive and offer a portrait of one of Old Providence's Confederate soldiers. The company left Harpers Ferry in mid-July. In a letter to Annie, Carson commented that, "this was the severest march we have had except one—we were so completely exhausted that we just fell down on the ground & in a few moments were fast asleep—we resumed our march the next morning at day break & arrived at 'Piedmont' where we took cars at this point."<sup>3</sup> They arrived at their destination, Manassas Junction, on July 18, in time to do battle at the First Manassas.

Not long after the fight on July 21, 1861, Carson wrote a letter to Annie in which he spared few details. Carson told her that the Saturday before the battle his company "took off in the direction of Alexandria and traveled about four miles on the lookout for the enemy. Night soon overtook us & then what a time we did have, nothing to eat, nothing to sleep on, & worse than all, we could get no water that was fit to drink. But we put up with it all without a murmur, knowing our country's welfare was at stake." The next day, the Sabbath, the men were called to arms before dawn. Although Carson commented to Annie that she had no doubt already heard the news of the battle, he related the well-known story of how the Union army nearly broke through the Confederate lines until they were reinforced by Generals Beauregard and Stuart and of how the Yankees ran all the way to Washington, D.C., leaving the Confederate army standing in the field. Carson wrote:

But oh what a spectacle presented itself then. . . . To see the killed and wounded laying on the field by hundreds and thousands was a horrid sight. But so it was I saw those whom I had been long acquainted, laying crying for help & for someone to take them away when it was impossible for me to do anything for them. I helped carry poor Charlie Bell off he had his arm and part of his shoulder torn off with a cannon ball. Baxter Ott & him were killed with the same ball. I cannot take the time to enumerate of all that I saw laying dead & wounded of our men neither do I want to call it to mind again for it is heart

rendering indeed to think of it.

The Old Providence community had suffered its first casualties.

A mobilized home front was as essential to the survival of the Confederacy as its army. Thousands of women's organizations emerged throughout the South, especially in the form of soldiers' aid societies, to provide food, clothing, and other provisions to the men on the front and bolster morale of the soldiers. The women of Old Providence organized their soldiers' aid society two months after the battle of First Manassas. The women elected Sarah Carson to be the society's president, Eliza McCormick its vice-president, and Annie Harris, the secretary and treasurer. Nearly every woman in the church joined the organization as did several men, whose dues of one dollar were substantially higher than the twenty-five cents required of women. In addition to dues, a subscription method was instituted that could be paid in money or clothing.<sup>4</sup>

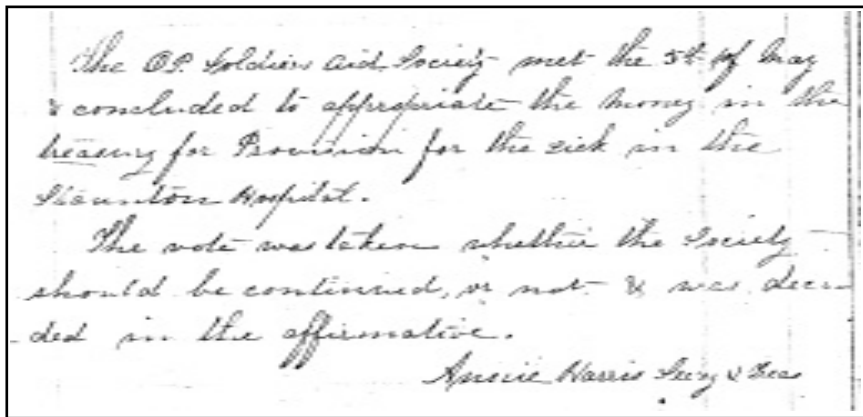
The society met once a month but members regularly worked on projects at home. Harris kept a careful record of expenditures and contributions: gloves, drawers, shirts, socks, comforts, quilts, coverlets, buttons, cloth, thread, yarn, bibles, eggs, chickens, butter, flax, crackers, quinces, ham pies, onions, bread, sugar, tea, telescope papers, and a broom. While the group's effort was initially impressive, activity slowed by the end of 1861. Harris noted in the minutes of the November 14 meeting that "There could be no cloth bought at the price we had expected to get it at—consequently there was no sewing done." Absenteeism grew. By January 1862 the group was able to produce only two shirts and one pair of socks. This slowdown is perhaps indicative of the deprivation the war already had visited upon the Valley. Although the Valley had been spared military action up to this point, it had not been spared domestic shortages.

The society's future was in doubt by the spring of 1862. The meeting minutes and records indicate that contributions and attendance had fallen off significantly. At the May 1862 meeting, members voted to try and continue their efforts.

During this time Annie maintained her correspondence with Carson. In September 1862 he wrote:

Your most welcome letter dated the first has just this moment come to hand which believe me was read with delight and interest, it being the only one received from any source whatever for over a month. You have no idea how much good it does a poor soldier to get a letter from absent friends, especially those who are as near and dear as I believe you to be.<sup>6</sup>

Spring and summer of 1862 found the 5<sup>th</sup> fighting at Kernstown, Port Re-



A page taken from the minutes book of the Old Providence Soldiers' Aid Society.

public, Gaines Farm, Cedar Mountain, and at Second Manassas. By that time, the regiment had lost sixty-eight men on the field of battle. Dr. William Steele McCormick, brother of Nathaniel D. McCormick and a member of the Old Providence Session, died on May 28, 1862, of wounds suffered at Kernstown. Carson wrote "I suppose you have had a full account of the battle at Manassas before this. Taking this for granted I will not occupy your time with a repetition, but will hasten to give you a brief account of my trip into Maryland."

Jackson had moved his brigade across the Potomac River after the Battle of Second Manassas in 1862. They engaged in a small action at Frederick City, where John McCutcheon lost his life in a charge through a cornfield. The regiment marched to Boonsboro, Williamsport, Martinsburg, Hagerstown, and Harpers Ferry where they fought at Bolivar Heights. From there they moved to Shepherdstown, where their forces were attacked by McClellan and Burnside, "and in fact the whole army from Washington and on the 17<sup>th</sup> one of the greatest battles of the war was fought, of which I have no time now to speak, suffice it to say, our loss was very heavy & that of the enemy equally as heavy if not more so." In 1863, Carson and other members of the 5<sup>th</sup> went on to see action at Kearnyville, Fredericksburg, and Chancellorsville. At Chancellorsville, the battle where Stonewall Jackson lost his life, Carson was wounded in the wrist on May 3, 1863, severely enough to warrant a three-month furlough.

Carson journeyed home for the summer to recover and rejoin family and friends in the Old Providence community. While at home, the lieutenant acted on a personal resolution he apparently had made sometime earlier. The session minutes record that, "Rev'd Edward Payne Walton, Chaplain of 5th Va. Infantry communicated that Lieutenant S.F. Carson has made a (credible) profession of faith and desires his name enrolled in our book." Carson, now thirty-two

years-old, the son of the man who had donated the land on which the new brick church stood, had decided to become a member of Old Providence. The session noted that "he, Carson, is providentially permitted to be with us on this occasion and had made known his request in person & after examination he was unanimously rece'd."<sup>5</sup>

Carson's relationship with Harris also must have grown closer while he was home on leave. In a short note written after his return to duty, he implored her not to forget him, that "I may continue to hold a place in your memory. Dearest is all I ask. I think of you often and the many happy hours we have spent together and still hope that we may again."<sup>9</sup> The first letter he wrote to her after his return to the regiment opens "Dearest One." From the field of battle, fourteen miles below Orange Courthouse on the Rapidan River, Carson wrote:

The Yankey cavalry are visible on the opposite side. . .since I commenced writing the cannons commenced firing and I should not be a surprise if before this time tomorrow we will have bloody times here. . .You are still due me a letter. I will write if spared when the battle is over (if we have one) & give you the particulars.<sup>10</sup>

His wound and furlough had caused Carson to miss the pivotal and costly battle of Gettysburg. Lee's penetration deep into Union territory resulted in losses that the Confederacy would not be able to overcome. It is clear in a letter that Carson wrote to his brother that southern morale was low:

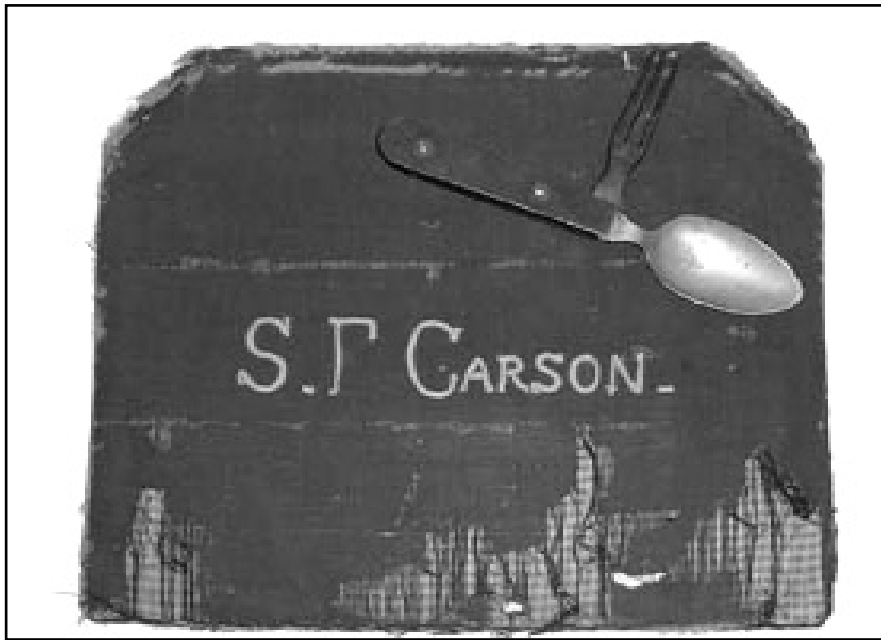
At this place, there have been some 4 men out of the Reg't who have deserted and gone to the enemy. Last night a lieut. out of Co. G deserted whilst on picket. A great deal of desertion is going on all through the army. And so many are being shot for the same offence. It seems the more shooting the more desertions. The health of our men has not been good since we came to this camp. There are now six in our company unfit for duty.<sup>11</sup>

Carson implored his brother to see about having a pair of boots made for him "as my old ones are nearly past wearing." By this time the Soldiers' Aid Society at Old Providence had disbanded, having held its last regular meeting in August of 1863. Although no reason was given in the minutes, an article in the Staunton newspaper hinted at the loss of morale among the South's women. Harris said as much in a letter to a friend when she described the war as "a dark and gloomy time." Harris assured her friend that she had not given up on the cause and did not think the South would ever be conquered. She added: "it is a dark cloud that overshadows us. Oh! I would be so glad if this unhappy war would only cease."<sup>6</sup>

The worst of times were ahead for both Harris and Carson. Samuel Carson

returned to duty. The 5<sup>th</sup> went into winter camp in Orange County at Camp Randolph on the Rapidan River near Morton's Ford after seeing action at Payne's Farm in the fall of 1863. Warren's Second Corps "made a demonstration of force" on February 6, 1864 while Carson was on picket duty. Carson and fifteen others from Company D were captured and made prisoners of war. The lieutenant was sent to Fort Delaware located on Pea Patch Island in the Delaware River.

In the earliest days of the war Confederate prisoners were paroled in exchange for Union prisoners and sent home after promising to fight no more. A strict ratio system attempted to ensure an equitable exchange. It worked so slowly, however, that a backlog developed by July 1862. Both sides turned any available space—warehouses, confiscated buildings, state prisons—into prison camps. The system never worked very well. By 1864 it was clear that Confederate prisoners were breaking their pledge and returning to the front. As a result Union General Ulysses S. Grant ended the exchange. This had serious ramifications for Northern men imprisoned by a Confederate government hard pressed to feed and clothe its own. Andersonville prison in Georgia is the most notorious example of the horrific conditions that existed in prison camps, but Union camps were equally abominable.



This carrier for holding personal documents as well as the eating utensils for an army mess kit are part of Samuel Frank Carson's personal items that have been passed down to his descendants.

Carson was not the only Old Providence member to become a prisoner of war. Nathaniel D. McCormick and J.H. Callison, both members of the session who rejoined the Confederate army in the fall of 1864, were held at Point Lookout, Maryland. Stuart Sharpe Brown, who was also captured at Morton's Ford and imprisoned at Fort Delaware, died on February 13, 1865.

While these men languished in prison in 1864, General Grant ordered the destruction of the Shenandoah Valley's summer harvest. Union General David Hunter managed to get into the Upper Valley by May and occupy the city of Staunton. General William Woods Averell's and General George Crook's forces united with Hunter's there on June 8. Their combined forces, numbering 20,000 infantry and 5,000 cavalry, began their march on June 10, 1864, when four columns left Staunton for Lexington. Hunter and General Sullivan advanced on Lexington through Mint Spring, Midway (Steeles Tavern), and Fairfield. Crook went by way of Middlebrook and Brownsburg while General Alfred N. Duffie held to the east through Waynesboro.<sup>7</sup>

Word of the Union advance panicked the countryside, and for good reason. Hunter had ordered his men to live off the land and to burn everything within five miles if Federal troops were fired upon. Union troops passed by the front doors of many in the Old Providence community. Nancy Emerson's diary provides an eyewitness account of the arrival of the Yankees:

They favored us with two visits (on June 9<sup>th</sup> and 10<sup>th</sup>) which will not soon be forgotten in these parts. The first day, they came in from the West, across the mountain. A party of 40 or 50 perhaps, came riding up, dismounted & rushed in. "Have you got any whiskey" said they, "got any flour? got any bacon?" [with plenty of oaths] "Come on boys," says one, "we'll find it all" With that, they pushed rudely by Sister C. who was terribly alarmed, & had been from the first news of their coming, & spread themselves nearly all over the house. . . That night they camped a mile or two from us, extending along the road two or three miles, & got a fine supper from the farms around them. . . Our visitors belonged to Averill's . . . They told us that Crook's men were a great deal worse than they, & that was true, but they were bad enough & worse at some other places than with us. At one of our neighbors, [Mr. H.] they took every thing they had to eat. . . They then poured out their molasses, scattered their preserves & sugar & other things about the floor, & mixed them all together & destroyed things generally . . . The lady before mentioned has told me since that no tongue can tell her feelings the day the Yankees were there. In the first place, they fired on her little son & another boy several times, as they sat on the fence watching their approach, & afterwards pretended that they took them for confederate soldiers from their being dressed in gray. Then her husband & oldest son were hid in the bushes in the garden, & she was in momentary fear of their being discovered & fired upon. The men & boys always kept out of the way, as they were sometimes taken off, & did not know what treatment they might receive, & thus the women were left to shift for themselves as best they could. Another of our neighbors was fired upon

several times until he either dropped or lay down, it was not known which. They said it was because he ran, but he was passing between their pickets & ours, who were firing at each other, & was obliged to run. . . They always fire upon those who run from them. . . On the 10th of June we received another visit from our invaders, at least, several thousand of them passed our house on their way from Staunton to Lexington. . . . They were four hours in passing.<sup>8</sup>

At a Union camp near Brownsburg, events turned deadly for David Creigh of Greenbrier and a member of the Lewisburg Presbyterian Church. Creigh killed and hid the body of a camp follower who had broken into his home. A runaway slave reported the incident to federal authorities who arrested Creigh and brought him to Rockbridge County. On Hunter's orders, Creigh was hanged. The hanging took place on James Morrison's farm, on what is today Hays Creek Road, not far from the Old Providence community.<sup>9</sup>

The Yankees arrived in Lexington on June 13 and shelled the town for three days, destroying Virginia Military Institute in retaliation for the cadets' role in the New Market battle.

While Samuel Carson's family, friends, and neighbors were contending with an advancing Union army, he was about to face his greatest trials. The prisoners had learned that 600 of the officers held at Fort Delaware were to be transferred south. Carson was among them. Told they were they were to be paroled, Carson and the others boarded the Crescent City on August 20 for Charleston harbor. The officers did not know it at the time, but they were not going to be exchanged. They were going to Morris Island to be used as human shields.

The Crescent City steamship that had once plied the waters of New Orleans carried the 600 on specially constructed shelves four tiers high that served as berths. Four men to a bunk with only two feet of space between tiers made for very crowded conditions. The 110<sup>th</sup> and 157<sup>th</sup> Ohio militia home guard regiments guarded the prisoners. The trip lasted nearly twenty eventful days. The ship ran aground, delaying it for nearly twelve hours. The court-martial of the ship's captain and his second mate the next day delayed the ship further. A few days later forty prisoners—the sickest among the 600—were exchanged for thirty-four noncombatants near Hilton Head Island.<sup>10</sup>

On September 1 the Crescent City steamed into Charleston Harbor. The stockade at Morris Island was incomplete, further delaying the prisoners from disembarking. Finally, the 560 remaining of the 600 men landed on Morris Island on September 7, 1864. Two days later Carson managed to write in a letter to Annie, "we were landed here on the 7<sup>th</sup> having been on board the Steamer Crescent 19 days. Had a pretty hard time I tell you. Our position at present is between Fort's Gregg and Wagner which could be made very uncomfortable to us but so far has not." The stockade was located at the most fired upon area

of the island. The ground was covered with iron and pocked with small craters. The 54th Massachusetts Volunteer Colored Regiment guarded them. He added in a postscript, "I am well at present, but was quite sick on board the boat for a short time. The rest of the 600 are generally well."

Carson was somewhat less candid in this letter to Annie. He did not tell her that the men had been put in a one-and-a-half acre open pen. He also did not tell Annie that men had been issued starvation rations of rancid meat and weevil-infested crackers in retaliation for the conditions at Andersonville. He probably realized by this time that he and the other prisoners were being placed in the line of Confederate fire because the defenders of Charleston had put 600 Union officers who were imprisoned in Charleston in the line of Union fire.

On September 8 the shelling of Forts Sumter, Moultrie and city of Charleston began. There was no protection from the shells that came from four sides. Mortars often fell short and landed directly in the stockade, rations worsened, and news of Atlanta's fall to Sherman reached the men. The "600" remained under fire for forty-five days. None were killed, although several guards had been killed on the parapet and outside the stockade. Two men died of dysentery and one died from pneumonia, a complication of a lung wound received at Gettysburg. At any time any one of the 600 could save himself by taking an Oath of Allegiance to the United States. Five agreed to but in the end no one did.<sup>11</sup>

Toward the end of October, orders came from Washington to cease shelling Charleston. On October 21 the prisoners were moved to Fort Pulaski, Georgia. Carson was later sent to Hilton Head, South Carolina. Eighteen men died that winter. The remaining group returned to Fort Delaware in March 1865 to be "fattened up" before they were released. Twenty-five more died at Fort Delaware, however. Carson was finally released on June 12, 1865, nearly two months after Lee's surrender at Appomattox. The "Immortal 600" as they came to be remembered were greeted as heroes throughout the South because they never abandoned the cause and because they chose death before dishonor.<sup>12</sup>

Lee surrendered to Grant at Appomattox Court House on April 9, 1865. The war was over; the Confederacy lay in ruins, and the Southern economy was devastated. Union soldiers occupied Augusta and Rockbridge Counties and the cities of Staunton and Lexington, preparing to reconstruct the South. Old Providence counted fifty-four among the dead and wounded. In an unusually personal entry in the Old Providence session minutes on May 13, 1865, Horatio Thompson, who also lost two sons in the war, reflected on the times:

The sacrament of the Lord's Supper was dispensed according to previous appointment . . . Gen. Lee's army having been surrendered on the 19<sup>th</sup> (sic) of



April and the Yankey Armies penetrating the county. The occasion was pleasant and refreshing though melancholy in reflection, owing to so (many) members of the congregations being killed and imprisoned. Sabbath evening closed with prayer.—H. Thompson, mod.<sup>13</sup>

Samuel Carson married Annie Harris on November 28, 1865. They had one daughter, Mary Lula Carson (Mrs. J. Van Walton), who was born in April of 1867. Annie died in 1877 and the next year Carson married Damaris Rowan. Carson made his living as a farmer and served Old Providence as a ruling elder, treasurer, and clerk of the session. He died February 28, 1893.

The wounds left by the war were deep, however. Like the rest of the South and like the rest of the nation, Samuel and Annie Carson and Old Providence would have to heal.

### Endnotes

<sup>1</sup> Emerson Papers, Diary of Nancy Emerson, 2 July 1862, Charlottesville, Va.: University of Virginia Alderman Library Special Collections.

<sup>2</sup> Lee A. Wallace, Jr. 5<sup>th</sup> Virginia Infantry (Lynchburg, Va.: H.E. Howard Inc., 1988), 16-17.

<sup>3</sup> Samuel Carson Letters, May 1861 to September 1864. Private collection. All letters cited hereafter originate in this collection and will not be individually cited.

<sup>4</sup> Old Providence Soldiers' Aid Society (OPSA), meeting minutes, 1861-1863, (Spottswood, Va.: Old Providence ARP Church).

<sup>5</sup> Old Providence session minutes, 6 June 1863 (Spottswood, Va.: Old Providence ARP Church).

<sup>6</sup> Annie Harris to Jennie Pringle, (Spottswood, Va.: Old Providence ARP Church, n.d.).

<sup>7</sup> Charles Turner, "Hunter's Sack of Lexington," Virginia Magazine of History and Biography, vol. 83, 1975.

<sup>8</sup> Emerson Diary, July 1864.

<sup>9</sup> Turner.

<sup>10</sup> Mariel Phillips Joslyn, *Immortal Captives* (Shippensburg, Pa.: White Mane Publishing Company, 1996), 81.

<sup>11</sup> *Ibid.*, 129.

<sup>12</sup> Mariel Phillips Joslyn, 63-65.

<sup>13</sup> Old Providence session minutes, 13 May 1865.

**Augusta County, Virginia, Marriages**  
Including residents who were married elsewhere  
(from The Staunton Spectator and General Advertiser  
September 1836-December 1837)

Compiled by Anne C. Kidd

Married on last Thursday by the Rev. Mr. Willson, Mr. John T. ARNALL to Miss Elizabeth STEELE. (20 Oct 1836)

Married on Thursday last by the Rev. J.C. Hensell, Mr. John BARE to Miss Drucilla Jane BEARD, daughter of Mr. Jacob BEARD – all of this county. (20 Oct 1836)

Married on Thursday last by the Rev. Mr. Steele, Mr. James H. BASKIN of Missouri (formerly of this county) to Miss Lucy M. CLARKE, daughter of Samuel CLARKE, Esq. of this town. (27 April 1837)

Married on Thursday last by the Rev. D.F. Bittle, Mr. George W. BAYLOR to Miss Louisa BEARD, daughter of Mr. Jacob BEARD, all of this county. (9 Nov 1837)

Married on Thursday the 12<sup>th</sup> ult. by the Rev. E. Thomas, Mr. Samuel H. BELL, son of Mr. David BELL to Miss Hannah H. McCUTCHEN, all of this county (9 Nov 1837)

Married on the 10<sup>th</sup> instant by the Rev. Wm. H. Coffin, Mr. William C. BLAKEMORE to Miss Sarah Margaret HOGSHEAD, all of this county. (17 Nov 1836)

Married on Thursday the 22d ult. by the Rev. J.C. Hensell, Mr. Jacob BOSSERMAN to Miss Elizabeth SWOTZEL, daughter of Mr. John SWOTZEL. (20 Oct 1836)

Married on the 5<sup>th</sup> of July by the Rev. Stephen Smith, Mr. Tolemey BRIGHTWELL of Rockingham to Mrs. Malinda JONES of Augusta County. (13 July 1837)

Married on Thursday eve last by the Rev. Mr. Steele, Mr. Jacob S. BROWN to Miss Ellen COWAN, daughter of the late Joseph S. COWAN, Esq. of this place. (22 Sept 1836)

Married Thursday last by the Rev. N. Wilson, Mr. George W. CAMPBELL to Miss Catharine SKEEN, all of this place. (14 Dec 1837)

Married on the 28<sup>th</sup> ult. by the Rev. Mr. Smith, Mr. John CARICOFF to Miss Mary SHOWALTERS, all of this county. (19 Oct 1837)

Married on the 4<sup>th</sup> instant by the Rev. Mr. Steele, Mr. Francis CARROLL of Greenbrier, to Miss Catharine LOHR, of this county. (13 Oct 1836)

Married on Thursday evening last by the Rev. Mr. Goodwin, Alfred CHAPMAN, Esq., of Orange County, to Miss Mary KINNEY, eldest daughter of William KINNEY, Esq., of this place. (14 Dec 1837)

Married on the 22<sup>nd</sup> ult. by the Rev. Mr. Steele, Mr. Robert CHRISTOPHER to Miss Mary LILLY. (6 April 1837)

Married on the 9<sup>th</sup> instant, Mr. Jacob CLINGENPEAL to Miss Isabella BEST, all of this county. (16 Feb 1837)

Married on Thursday last by the Rev. Mr. Willson, Mr. David D. COYNER to Miss Celestina CALDWELL – all of this county. (20 Oct 1836)

Married on the 15<sup>th</sup> by the Rev. Wm. Brown, Mr. James W. CRAWFORD of Augusta to Miss Sarah A. SIMMS, daughter of the late Col. Isaac SIMMS of Albemarle. (24 Aug 1837)

Married on the 21<sup>st</sup> instant by the Rev. Mr. Reimensnyder, Mr. Elias CRAWN to Miss Eliza KERSH, daughter of Jacob KERSH, dec'd, all of this county. (28 Dec 1837)

Married on Tuesday last by the Rev. B.N. Brown, Mr. Caleb CRONE to Miss Susannah PATTERSON, daughter of the Rev. Geo. PATTERSON, all of the county. (23 Feb. 1837)

Married on the 1<sup>st</sup> by the Rev. Mr. Freeman, Mr. Jacob DAFF to Miss Margaret SHOWALTERS, daughter of Mr. George SHOWALTERS, all of this town. (9 Nov 1837)

Married on the 29<sup>th</sup> ult. by the Rev. Mr. Kilpatrick, Mr. James DAVIES of Rockingham to Miss Mary Ann HOGSHETT, daughter of Mr. William E. HOGSHETT, of this county. (13 Oct 1836)

Married on the 23<sup>rd</sup> by the Rev. Mr. Steele, Mr. Alex'r B. DAWSON to Miss Sarah LONG, all of this county. (13 Oct 1836)

Married on the 15<sup>th</sup> by the Rev. Mr. Burgess, Mr. Thomas DEANE to Miss Nancy BUMPHREY, daughter of Mr. Joseph BUMPHREY, all of this county. (22 June 1837)

Married on Thursday last by the Rev. B.N. Brown, Mr. Madison DOOM to Miss Margaret McALEAR, all of this county. (8 Dec. 1836)

Married on Thursday the 22<sup>nd</sup> inst. by the Rev. Mr. Kilpatrick, Dr. Peter B. DOW-DALL, formerly of Middlebrook, to Mrs. Caroline HALL, widow of the late Col. Jas. Hall, deceased, of Rockingham. (29 Dec 1836)

Married Thursday last by the Rev. Mr. Morrison, Robert DOYLE, Esq. of Rock-bridge, to Miss Margaret Ann MERRITT, daughter of Mr. John MERRITT, of this county. (15 Sept 1836)

Married Thursday last by the Rev. Mr. Smith, Mr. James M. DUNN to Miss Mary Ann PECK, daughter of the late Jacob PECK Jun., dec'd of this county. (31 Aug 1837)

Married the 10<sup>th</sup> inst., near Buchanan, Alex. P. ESKRIDGE, Esq., of Fincastle, to Miss Juliet TAYLOR, daughter of the late Hon. Allen TAYLOR. (24 Aug 1837)

Married in Staunton, the 15<sup>th</sup>, by the Rev. Wm. G. Jackson, Mr. George FETZER to Miss Susan KURTZ, daughter of Mr. Jacob KURTZ, dec'd, late of this place. (24 Aug 1837)

Married on the 7<sup>th</sup> by the Rev. Mr. Samuel Kennerly, Mr. William FISHER to Miss Julia Ann CULLEN, daughter of Mr. William F. CULLEN, all of this county. (16 Nov 1837)

Married on Thursday last by the Rev. B.N. Brown, Mr. Martin FITZPATRICK to Miss Margaret SHEETS, daughter of Mr. Henry SHEETS, all of this town. (15 Dec 1836)

Married on the 30<sup>th</sup> by the Rev. F.M. Mills, Mr. William H. FOX to Miss Margaret HODGE. (11 Nov 1836)

Married on the 30<sup>th</sup> ult. in Catlettsburg, Ky. by the Rev. John H. Condit, Mr.

Thomas H. FRAME, formerly of this county, to Miss M.C. CATLETT, daughter of H. CATLETT, Esq. (21 Dec 1837)

Married on the 5<sup>th</sup> by the Rev. Mr. Eichelberger, Mr. John FRENGER, of this county, to Miss Mary RICHARD, daughter of Jacob RICHARD, Esq. of Frederick County. (14 Dec 1837)

Married on Thursday the 5<sup>th</sup> instant, by the Rev. G.L. Brown, Mr. John G. FULTON, of this county to Miss Maria G. THARP, late of Baltimore, Md. (19 Oct 1837)

Married on Thursday last, by the Rev. Stevens D. Hopkins, Mr. Samuel GILLOCK, Printer, to Miss Malvina KICE, all of this town. (23 Feb 1837)

Married in Harrisonburg on the 29<sup>th</sup> ult. by Rev. Mr. Coffin, Mr. George S. GROVE, of Augusta, to Miss Nancy ROHR, daughter of Mr. Jacob ROHR of Harrisonburg. (5 Jan 1837)

Married on Thursday last by the Rev. Mr. Martin, Mr. John GROVE to Miss Margaret TEABO, daughter of Mr. Abraham TEABO, all of this town. (29 June 1937)

Married on Thursday last by the Rev. J.C. Hensell, Mr. Daniel M. HARDEN, mer-  
chant of Middlebrook to Miss Eliza Ann GIBBONS, daughter of Mr. Abel GIBBONS,  
all of Augusta County. (22 Sept 1836)

Married on Thursday the 23<sup>rd</sup> by the Rev. Z. Jordan, Mr. John HARLAN to Miss Sarah HUNTER, daughter of Mr. James HUNTER of Augusta County. (8 June 1837)

Married on Thursday last by the Rev. J.J. Glosbrenner, Mr. Robert H. HOLLAND to Miss Eliza Ann SHUEY, daughter of Mr. Christian SHUEY, all of this county. (19 Oct 1837)

Married on Thursday last by the Rev. A.B. McCorkle, the Rev. Issaac JONES, Pastor of Hebron, to Miss Maria W. FINLEY, daughter of Mr. Samuel FINLEY, all of this county. (16 Nov 1837)

Married on the 8<sup>th</sup> inst. by the Rev. Wm. H. Coffin, Mr. George A. KICE, formerly of Staunton, to Miss Rebecca Ann HICKS, daughter of Mr. Joseph HICKS of Har-  
risonburg. (17 Nov 1836)

Married on the 19<sup>th</sup> instant by the Rev. James W. Phillips, Mr. John KOINER, of Augusta, to Mrs. Elizabeth THOMPSON, of this place. Harrisonburg Reg. (28 Sept 1837)

Married on 1<sup>st</sup> instant by the Rev. John A. Vanlear, Mr. Andrew KOOGLER, of Rockingham County, to Miss Dianah GRAHAM of Augusta County. (10 Aug 1837)

Married on Thursday last by the Rev. A.B. McCorkle, Mr. Robert S. LAREW to Miss Mary J.L. WILLSON, eldest daughter of Col. Wm. WILLSON, all of this county. (21 Dec 1837)

Married on Wednesday last by the Rev. Mr. Goodwin, Mr. John LEWIS, of Mason County, to Miss Mary T. STRIBLING, daughter of Erasmus STRIBLING, Esq. of this town. (7 Sept 1837)

Married on 18<sup>th</sup> ult. by the Rev. Wm. Calhoun, Mr. Jacob LIGHTNER to Miss Mary W. PILLSON. (1 June 1837)

Married on the 15<sup>th</sup> inst by the Rev. Mr. Dunn, Mr. William O. MAUPIN, of Albemarle, to Miss Margaret M. McDOWELL, daughter of Harvey H. McDOWELL, Esq. of this county. (31 Aug 1837)

Married on Sunday last by the Rev. Mr. Steele, Mr. Charles McALEAR to Miss Helen Jane EDWARDS, both of this county. (7 Sept 1837)

Married on the 12<sup>th</sup> by the Rev. Mr. Jones, Mr. James McCLURE, Jr., to Miss Matilda Jane PARIS, daughter of Mr. George PARIS. (19 Jan 1837)

Married on Thursday last at the home of Mr. David Kerr, near Shemariah Church, by the Rev. E. Thomas, Mr. Samuel D. McCUTCHEN, of this county, to Miss Julia A.C. PINE, formerly of Frederick County, Va. (23 Nov 1837)

Married on the 20<sup>th</sup> instant by the Rev. Mr. Martin, Mr. Morrison McDANIEL to Miss Peachy WILLIAMS. (22 June 1837)

Married in this place on the 13<sup>th</sup> inst. by the Rev. Mr. Martin, Mr. Henry MESSER-SMITH to Mrs. Mary ECKLE. (22 Jan 1837)

Married on the 8<sup>th</sup> inst. by the Rev. J.C. Hensell, Mr. Abraham MICHAEL to Miss

Eliza BIRD, both of Middlebrook. (17 Aug 1837)

Married on the 26<sup>th</sup> instant, near Stribling Springs by the Rev. J.J. Reimensnyder, Mr. John MICHAEL to Miss Maria OREBAUGH, daughter of Mr. Adam OREBAUGH, all of this county. (9 Feb 1837)

Married on the 25<sup>th</sup> ult. by the Rev. Wm. Calhoun, Mr. Thomas C. MITCHELL to Miss Isabella Ann LILLY. (1 June 1837)

Married on the 29<sup>th</sup> ult. by the Rev. Samuel Kennerly, Mr. James PARSONS to Miss Martha PATTERSON, daughter of James PATTERSON, Esq., all of this county. (5 Jan 1837)

Married on the 16<sup>th</sup> by the Rev. Stephen Smith, Mr. Jacob PERKEY to Miss Sarah L. FERTIG, both of this county. (23 Feb 1837)

Married on the 1<sup>st</sup> instant by the Rev. Wm. Calhoun, Mr. James POAGE to Miss Nancy BROWN, all of this county. (7 Sept 1837)

Married on the 1<sup>st</sup> inst. by the Rev. Wm. Calhoun, Mr. David POLMER to Miss Jane GREAYER. (15 June 1837)

Married on the 12<sup>th</sup> ultimo, by the Rev. John J. Reimensnyder, Mr. William QUICK to Miss Elizabeth STEIGLE, daughter of Jacob STEIGLE, Esq., all of this county. (23 Nov 1837)

Married on the 14<sup>th</sup> inst. by the Rev. Mr. G.F. Brown, Mr. John ROHR, of Harrisonburg, to Miss Margaret J. GROVES, daughter of Mr. David GROVES, of Augusta. (20 Oct 1837)

Married on the 29<sup>th</sup> ult by the Rev. Stephen Smith, Mr. James E. ROSS to Miss Mary CURRY, daughter of Samuel CURRY, Esq., all of this county. (15 Dec 1836)

Married on the 14<sup>th</sup> inst. by the Rev. J.J. Glossbrenner, Mr. Nicholas RYAN to Miss Cristena SMITH, daughter of Mr. Jacob SMITH, all of this county. (23 Feb 1837)

Married on the 17<sup>th</sup> ult. at the residence of Mr. Henry Messersmith in Augusta County by the Rev. J.J. Reimensnyder, Mr. William SANDY to Miss Susanna RAU-

LEIGH – all of Augusta County. (1 Dec 1836)

Married on Thursday last near Greenville by the Rev. G.L. Brown, Mr. Jacob SHELLY to Miss Dorcas MILLER, all of this county. (6 July 1837)

Married on the 9<sup>th</sup> inst. by the Rev. John H. Reimensnyder, Mr. William T. SHIPLET to Miss Nancy OREBAUGH, daughter of Mr. Martin OREBAUGH, all of this county. (23 Nov 1837)

Married on Thursday last, by the Rev. Stephen Smith, Mr. Cyrus R. SHULTZ to Miss Mary Jane WHITE, daughter of Mr. David WHITE of Greenville. (12 Jan 1837)

Married on the 6<sup>th</sup> inst. by the Rev. Jacob I. Glossbrenner, Mr. George SMITH to Miss Margaret RHYAN, daughter of Mr. John RHYAN all of Augusta County. (29 Sept 1836)

Married on the 19<sup>th</sup> inst. by the Rev. Wm. H. Coffin, Mr. George W. SNAPP, of Staunton, to Miss Elizabeth FISHER of Mount Crawford. (27 Oct 1836)

Married on Thursday last by the Rev. B.N. Brown, Dr. Alexander ST. CLAIR to Miss Margaret JENNINGS, all of this town. (8 Dec 1836)

Married on the 4<sup>th</sup> inst. by the Rev. Mr. Steele, Mr. Adam SWINK to Miss Letitia ABNEY, all of this county. (19 Jan 1837)

Married on the 12<sup>th</sup> by the Rev. Mr. Martin, Mr. Jacob SWISHER to Miss Catharine FAWVER, daughter of Mr. Jacob FAWVER, all of this county. (26 Oct 1837)

Married on the 9<sup>th</sup> inst. by the Rev. John A. Steele, Mr. Robert M. TATE to Miss Susan W. GOLD, daughter of Mr. James GOLD of Rockbridge. (17 Aug 1837)

Married on Wednesday last by the Rev. Mr. Cunningham, Mr. Wm. TATE, of Augusta, to Miss Martha GRAHAM, daughter of Edward GRAHAM, Esq., of this village. Lexington Gazette (11 May 1837)

Married on Thursday last by the Rev. Mr. Steele. Mr. Michael TEABO to Miss Elizabeth CLARKE, daughter of John CLARKE, Esq., all of this town. (30 Mar 1837)

Married on the 2<sup>nd</sup> inst. by the Rev. William Calhoon, Mr. Henry TEAFORD to Miss Julia Ann SIEG, daughter of Mr. Paul SIEG, all of this county. (10 Nov 1837)

Married on the 10<sup>th</sup> by the Rev J.C. Hensell, Mr. John WAID to Miss Diana COLE, eldest daughter of Mr. John COLE, of Augusta. (17 Aug 1837)

Married on the 28<sup>th</sup> Jan. by the Rev. Stephen Smith, Mr. Obediah WAID to Miss Caroline HOLT, all of this county. (23 Feb 1837)

Married on Tuesday last, by the Rev. Mr. Steele, Mr. Daniel WARD to Miss Sarah HOGAN. (15 Dec 1836)

Married on the 5<sup>th</sup> inst. by the Rev. Samuel Kennerly, Mr. Jacob WEIST, of Augusta, to Miss Anna Mary PIRKEY, daughter of Mr. George PIRKEY of Rockingham. (1q4 Dec 1837)

Married on the 31<sup>st</sup> ult by the Rev. A.B. McCorkle, Mr. John P. WILLSON, of Rockbridge, to Miss Sarah BLACKWOOD, daughter of Samuel BLACKWOOD, Esq. of this county. (16 Nov 1837)

Married on Thursday last by the Rev. G.L. Brown, Mr. William WILLIS to Miss Emila BLACKBURN. (9 Nov 1837)

Married on the 12<sup>th</sup> by the Rev. Mr. Martin, Mr. Samuel YOUNES to Miss Charlotte DOOM, all of this county. (26 Oct 1837)

Married on the 7<sup>th</sup> by the Rev. Mr. Vanlear, Mr. Andrew YOUNG, Jun., of Augusta, to Miss Mary HERNSBERGER, daughter of Jacob HERNSBERGER, Esq., of Rockingham. (14 Dec 1837).

Married in Harrisonburg on the 15<sup>th</sup> instant by the Rev. J.W. Phillips, Mr. William YOUNG, Esq., of Staunton, to Mrs. Emma C. CHASE, late of Baltimore, Md. (24 Aug 1837).

Key: inst., instant – this month; ult., ultimate – last month; this city – Staunton; this county – Augusta

The two marriage registers for Augusta County from 1785 to 1850 have been published. They contain the names of persons who were married, the date

of the marriage, and the name of the minister performing the ceremony. Not all of the weddings were announced in the paper but most of the time additional information was included in the paper. Thirty-five of the above weddings were not recorded in Augusta County probably because the ministers did not record them or they have been lost.

These newspapers have been microfilmed and are available for use in the Augusta County Library, Fishersville; City of Staunton Library, Staunton; and Waynesboro Public Library, Waynesboro.

All extant marriage bonds for this time period have been arranged by date in 32 volumes in the Augusta County Courthouse, Staunton. The groom and the father of the bride or a friend went to the county court to get a license to marry. Sometimes the bond gives the name of the parent(s) and the signature of a parent or guardian will be found as well.

In addition to the published marriages from the minister's returns and the above abstracts, the following list of bonds is not included in either source.

Dates of bonds could have been the day of the marriage or the bonds could have been issued a few days earlier.

Marriage Bonds Sept 1836-Dec 1837  
In Augusta County Courthouse  
Staunton, Virginia

William ALINGER	Elizabeth SHAVER	11 Sept 1837
Alexander ANDERSON	Sarah PATTERSON	29 April 1837
William A. ANDERSON	Mary Jane KERR	9 April 1837
William BARNETT	Caroline SMITH	24 Nov 1836
Ralph BLACK, s. James	Mary BECK	19 Jan 1837, s. Jacob
Nimrod BLACKWELL, Jr.	Elizabeth PAUL, wid.	28 Aug 1837, s. Nimrod, Sr.
John BROWN	Jane ROBISON	24 July 1837, d. Andrew
William BULL	Lydia BEAVER	19 Sept 1837
John BUMGARDNER	Rebecca HANGER, wid.	14 Oct 1837
James CHAPLIN, s. Joseph	Polly BOWMAN	15 Sept 1836, d. George
Samuel CLARKE	Elizabeth COFFMAN	25 April 1837, d. Christian
Jacob CLICK, s. John	Polly EARTHART	15 Sept 1836, d. Philip
Benjamin COFFMAN, s. Christian	Elizabeth SWICK	1 Sept 1837, d. Emanuel
Enoch COFFMAN, s. Jacob	Catharine BUNCH	19 Dec 1837
Martin COFFMAN	Virginia GILLIAT/GILBERT	23 Oct 1837, d. William
David S. COINER	Catharine NEWMAN	14 Aug 1837, d. Nancy
Richard COLEY	Catharine PICKERING	9 Oct 1836
Harvey G. COURSEY	Catharine Jane MARSHALL	26 Aug 1837, d. George

Henry CRONE, Jr., s. Henry	Evelina COOKE	8 April 1837
George DANNER	Sarah JOURDAN	13 Aug 1837, d. Katharine
George C. DOUGLASS	Sarah BECK	26 Dec 1836
Samuel FRAME, parents dec'd	Lavenia BUNCH, father dec'd	18 Dec 1837, d. Mary
William GILES	Nancy HELMS	25 Dec 1836
Strother GRADY	Sarah LARY	27 Dec 1837, d. Abednego
Philip GREAVES, Jr., s. Philip	Eliza T. PALMER	26 Oct 1837, d. George
Jacob HARMAN, s. John	Rebecca Ann STANTON	3 Oct 1836, d. Beverly
John HARRIS	Elizabeth CAREY	20 Dec 1836, d. Frederick
Jonathan HART	Mary DULL	14 Jan 1837, d. John
David HINER	Catharine NAIR	6 Nov 1837, d. Genry
John JOHNSON	Patsy WALKER	29 Dec 1837
Samuel JOHNSON	Catharine ARMENTROUT	5 Oct 1837, d. John dec'd Margaret
John KIRACOFFE, s. Henry	Mary SHOWALTER	25 Sept 1837, d. Jacob (CARRICOFFE)
Archibald KOINER, s. John	Ann COINER	27 Oct 1836, d. Philip
David LAIRD, wid.	Nancy P. LONG	25 Dec 1837 Parents dec'd
Richard W. LAUCK	Julia WILLSON	29 Nov 1837
Samuel LESSLEY, s. Samuel	Polly GWIN	21 June 1837, d. Thomas
Ross RIPPETOE	Susanna LAYMAN	6 Feb 1837
Jonathan SHEETZ	Elizabeth AYLER	30 Jan 1837, d. Mary
Joel SMITH, wid.	Mary B. FERGUSON, wid	5 Dec 1837
William SMITH	Barbara CAUFMAN	14 Sept 1837
Jacob SWISHER	Sarah SWISHER	19 Sept 1836, d. John
Samuel SWISHER	Sarah Ann FAUBER	9 April 1837
Daniel TRUCKSELL	Eliza OLINGER	27 April 1837, d. George
James VANFOSSEN, s. Jacob	Louisa MURRY	30 Oct 1837, parents dec'd
Otho WILLIAMS, wid.	Elizabeth MITCHELL	29 Dec 1837, parents dec'd
William S. WOODWARD	Sarah Ann BLACK	15 Aug 1837, d. Samuel, Sr.

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